

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

Derek Shaw

The Power of Commitment and the Shadow of Bureaucracy: Factors  
Affecting Organisational Culture in UK Defence Equipment and  
Support, 2008-2014

Cranfield Defence and Security

PhD

Academic Year: 2015

Supervisor: Dr Charles Kirke

June 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research exposed some of the factors that affected organisational culture and group behaviour in Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) from its inception in 2007 through to 2014, when it became a Bespoke Trading Entity.

The factors that were examined included organisationally legitimised personal, social and geographic identity, and linguistic difference and group size. Metaphor was also used by group members to describe the relationship they had with their groups. Group size was another factor that affected group behaviour. Finally, the effects of socio-technical induction and socio-cultural integration were seen to be additional factors that allowed cultural drag to occur within DE&S.

The research was an insider ethnographic study that used a qualitative, multi-factorial approach which encompassed 6 years of observations, 124 interviews, and included the analysis of appropriate DE&S policy documents. This thesis is considered to be unique because no research of this nature, or at this level, has been carried out in DE&S, the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) and the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO). In addition, no studies have investigated the organisational culture of DE&S, apart from Kirke (2007a unpublished), Kirke (2010), which was a published article that was informed by that pilot study.

The factors that were identified combined to produce both an organisation that possessed multiple organisational cultures and one single ethos which was that of delivering equipment to troops and supporting the troops, described as ‘front-line-first’. There was also an organisational culture that was affected by both the socio-technical and socio-cultural interactions of its members and of unconscious behaviours. All of those factors acted together as a system of interactions, with different factors taking primacy depending on the organisational context, no single factor being consistently more important than any other. The ethos of “front-line-first” was embedded within the DE&S organisational culture as a value which may have been used as a metaphor for the primacy of the overarching organisational culture of supporting the front-line.



**KEYWORDS:**

Group size, tribalism, para-tribes, identity, socialisation, socio-technical, socio-cultural, cultural drag.



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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Expansion
ABW	Abbeywood
A&DC. Assessment And Development Centre.	Used by MOD, to assess suitability of staff for promotion between broader banded civilian grades. Phased out in 2013.
DE&S	Defence Equipment and Support
DPA	Defence Procurement Agency
DLO	Defence Logistics Organisation
IPT	Integrated Project Team, Isolated Project Team
LFE	Learning From Experience. A required method of identifying practice and process lessons within project management. Initially developed from a DPA ethos. (Jordan et al., 1988) Prevalent throughout DE&S.
MOD	Ministry of Defence
PRG	Policy Rules and Guidance
RAF	Royal Air Force
RN	Royal Navy
SCS	
*to denote hierarchical grade	
<i>Words in italics</i>	Words in italics are contested terms or vernacular phrases
‘ ‘	Mark quotations from respondents

## DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Contracting for Capability (CfC)	Under a Contracting for Capability (CfC) contract industry would be required to deliver a complete capability, which would include operators and maintainers and all of the support. <sup>1</sup>
Front Line First	Concept of supporting Soldiers, Sailors and Aircrew, who ever they are and wherever they are.
Banter	The playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.
Military capability	The ability to achieve a specified wartime objective (win a war or battle, destroy a target set). It includes four major components: force structure, modernization, readiness, and sustainability.
Floor-plate	A distinct, functional area within a Neighbourhood of Abbeywood, usually, but not exclusively, home to a single functional group or team.
Neighbourhood	A single building within Abbeywood, home to usually, but not exclusively one Operating Centre.
Acquisition Hub	The geographical area defined by Bath, Bristol and Corsham where DPA and DLO activities were collocated to form DE&S.
Pragmademic	Describes the act of bridging the pragmatic, work based elements and the academic elements of a project. Used by Patching in the context of soft systems analysis (Patching, 1990)
Socio-technical	Linking the people, the socio, of an organisation, with the technical processes, rules and constructs of an organisation (Trist, 1981, Cummings and Srivastva, 1977, Trist, 1978)

Socio-cultural	Linking the people, the socio, with the cultural norms of their groups.
Match Fit	A phrase to denote a changed DE&S as a Bespoke Trading Entity, with world class processes and 'a One DE&S way of carrying out its work
Managed Service Provider (MSP)	The managed service provider (MSP) contracts are being brought in to drive the DE&S transformation programme by providing skilled personnel who have the expertise and past experience in implementing transformational change in organisations as large and complex as DE&S. (MOD, 2014c)

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduces the research organisation, Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S). It also introduces the research question and some of the reasons that led to the research being carried out.

This research was a snapshot of the elements of the organizational culture of DE&S between 2008 and 2014. The factors that contributed to the organisational cultures were investigated through a “*trouble case*” lens as described by Kaufert et al. (1984). This line of enquiry was not a deliberate strategy, rather it developed from the data. The use of this method enabled a narrative to be developed that took extreme examples of group, personal and organisational behaviour and allowed the explanation of the underlying story to provide reasons for that particular behaviour being exhibited. This approach also allowed comparison to be made between the technical rules that DE&S provided and staff behaviour, which was seen to be pragmatic custom and practice.

The aim of this research was to investigate the organisational culture within a department of the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S). It did this by firstly identifying the organisational culture of DE&S and then explaining it.

Accordingly the research question that this research set out to answer was:

*‘What factors affected the organisational culture of DE&S? between 2008 and 2014’.*

The research contributes new knowledge because it describes group behaviours and organisational cultures that were generally recognized within DE&S and its precursor organisations by those considered to be outsiders, but which had not previously been subject to in-depth academic study.

The researcher had unprecedented access within this closed organisation between 2008 and 2014 because he was employed as an established civil servant in DE&S.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.1 The Research Domain

The research was carried out in the Ministry of Defence (MOD): Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S). In 2007 the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) and the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO) were merged to form a new single organisation called Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S). DE&S was created in order to *“improve financial planning by ensuring that new equipment and its in-service support costs were planned more coherently”*. MOD (2006 Section 3, para 20). This overarching aim was defined politically for DE&S at a governmental level in 2006 and it differed substantially from the aims that the DPA and the DLO held as individual organisations. The aims were, in DPA, *“To equip the Armed Forces”*, (Office, 2005) and in the DLO, to *“Deliver Logistics for Operations”*. (The National Archive, 2007). These individual aims could be thought to be contradictory because the DPA procured equipment and did not have to support it, and the DLO supported it, without having a say in what equipment was bought.

The research was geographically constrained by the location of what was called the *Acquisition Hub*, which comprised: Corsham in Wiltshire, Ensleigh and Foxhill in Bath, and Abbeywood in Bristol.

Within the overall organisation of the MOD, DE&S was a Top Level Budget (TLB).<sup>3</sup> During the period of the research, DE&S comprised 27,000<sup>4</sup> staff in total and had a worldwide presence. The Headquarters were in Abbeywood, Bristol, where approximately 6,687 people<sup>5</sup> were based.

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<sup>2</sup> Informal observations started in 2005 on the researcher joining the DPA, and subsequently moving into DE&S with the merger of the DPA and the DLO.

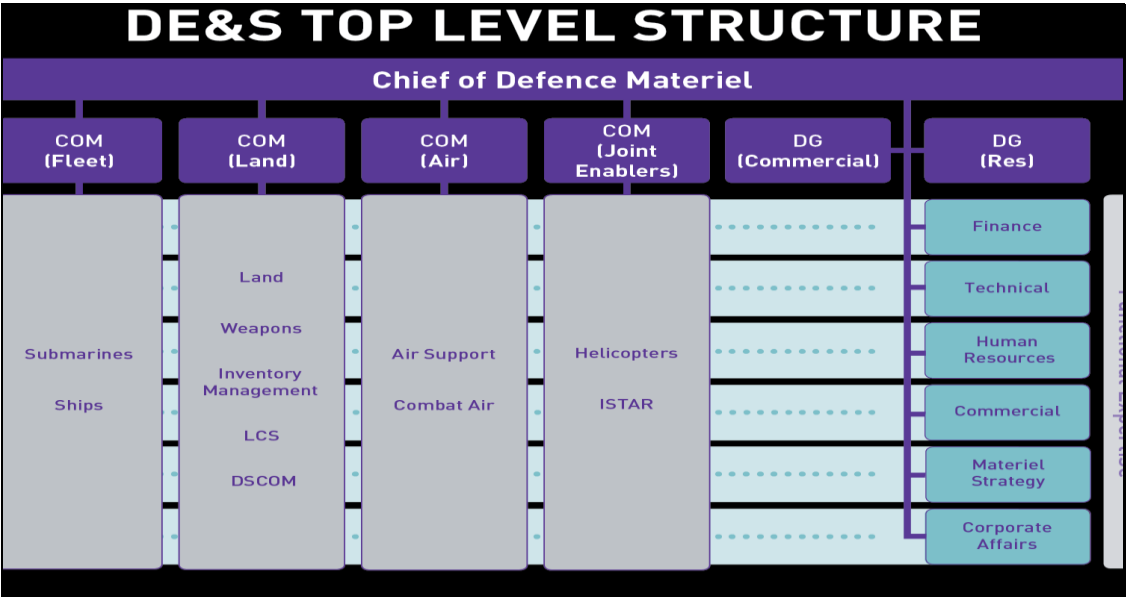
<sup>3</sup> An organisation construct that was part of MOD, but possessed a high degree of autonomy from MOD.

<sup>4</sup> This figure was valid in 2009 as part of Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2012 the staff numbers were reduced to 18,000 approx.

<sup>5</sup> Including consultants and others such as contractors.

DE&S was, and still is, responsible for the procurement of the UK defence equipment capability, and for the support and disposal of that capability. This capability ranged from the provisioning of food to the military, to the procurement of major military systems, such as submarines, ships, or aircraft. It was therefore a Programme and Project Management organisation.

The mission statement of DE&S is: *“To equip and support our Armed Forces for operations now and in the future.”*<sup>6</sup> This statement combines elements of the DPA and DLO mission statements. The range of skills and functions within DE&S includes engineers, Programme and Project Managers, Commercial negotiators and Financial Controllers. *“All of whom are focussed on ensuring the right equipment and support is available to our customers and users.”*<sup>7</sup> To achieve these aims DE&S is structured in the manner shown in Figure 1-1.



<sup>6</sup> DE&S Business plan 2010-2013, page 2.

<sup>7</sup> DE&S Corporate Plan 2015-2016-p 5.



## Figure 1-1 Simplified Organisational Structure of DE&S

Source: DE&S Corporate Overview Presentation

In order to carry out those responsibilities military personnel who worked alongside civilian staff, made up approximately 12% of the staff population.<sup>8</sup> During the period of the research, in DE&S, there were varying ratios of military personnel to civil servants. The ratio depended on both the type of work to be carried out and the domain within which the Operating Centre was based. Some Operating Centres were fully staffed by Civil servants, while others may have had in specific project teams up to 80% military personnel. At the time of the research, DE&S was led by a member of the Senior Civil Service, (SCS) of 4\* grade. A star grade (\*) is a signifier of a pay band within the Military and also the Civil Service where the person holds a rank that is above B1 or military equivalent. Chief of Defence Materiel (CDM) and functional groups were led by an SCS 3\* civil servant, the military equivalent being a 3\* military officer. Table 1-1 shows how military and civilian ranks are marked and their equivalence within DE&S.

These functional group leaders were labelled either a Chief of Materiel (Land, Air or Maritime), or a civilian Director (Finance, Commercial, Joint Enablers or Human Resources). Chiefs of Materiel (COM), areas were further broken down into Operating Centres, which were led by an SCS 2\* military or rank equivalent civil servant.

In terms of organisational structures, DE&S comprised a number of 3\* Chiefs of Materiel, who were served by 2\* Operating Centres, Operating Centres which were responsible for delivering equipment capability such as Armoured Fighting Vehicles, Surface Ships, or Submarines or Combat Air capability. Operating Centres were further divided into Pillars or business Units and Delivery Teams whose role was to deliver a specific item of equipment, and also Support Groups, who provided services such as commercial, or finance expertise and support to Project Teams. Delivery Teams were divided into Role Teams or Project Teams,

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<sup>8</sup> 1106 at 20 Oct 2010, Source DE&S Secretariat. The organisation of DE&S is described in more detail in section 4.2.

responsible for delivering a single element of a project. These groups contained a mix of military personnel, Civil Service personnel, contractors and industry staff. All of these groups varied in size and function. Functionally these areas were defined by the types of capability that they delivered, or by the function that they performed.

Project Teams were responsible within an equipment domain for the delivery of a specific project or capability, for example, a weapon system, or platform, such as a ship. Project and Delivery Teams could comprise varying levels of Civil Service and military personnel. Each Operating Centre, Delivery Team, Role Team, or Support Group was found to possess its own physical boundary, organisational dialect, identity, and boundary of responsibility and function. These organisationally formalised groups within DE&S were essentially the same as had existed in the DPA and the DLO. Some groups that procured and supported equipment were merged in order to provide what was termed a *through life* approach to equipment procurement and support, while others remained unchanged. This through life approach was defined in a policy document, JSP 886. JSP 886 is a repository for Defence logistics policy, processes and guidance. JSP 886 is intended to be used by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) and Front Line Command (FLC) logistic staff and, to an increasing degree, by Industry (DE&S). It comprises seven volumes and underpinned both the methods of acquisition and support of equipment but also the bureaucracy of DE&S.

To help the reader to understand one of the differences between civilian staff and military who worked alongside each other the differences in assigned rank labels are shown in Table 1-1.

	Civil Service Pay Band	British Army	Royal Navy	Royal Air Force
Serial 1	SCS - Senior Civil Service Pay Band 4	General 4*	Admiral 4*	Air Chief Marshal 4*
Serial 2	SCS- Senior Civil Service Pay Band 3	Lieutenant General 3*	Vice Admiral 3*	Air Marshal 3*
Serial 3	SCS - Senior Civil Service Pay Band 2	Major General 2*	Rear Admiral 2*	Air Vice Marshal 2*
Serial 4	SCS - Senior Civil Service Pay Band 1	Brigadier 1*	Commodore 1*	Air Commodore 1*
Serial 5	B1	Colonel	Captain	Group Captain
Serial 6	B2	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Wing Commander
Serial 7	C1	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Squadron Leader
Serial 8	C2	Captain	Lieutenant	Flight Lieutenant
Serial 9	D	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	Sub-Lieutenant	Flying Officer
Serial 10	E1	WO1 <sup>9</sup>	WO1	WO1

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<sup>9</sup> Warrant Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

	Civil Service Pay Band	British Army	Royal Navy	Royal Air Force
Serial 11	E2	WO2 <sup>10</sup>	WO2	Flight Sergeant

**Table 1-1 Grade and Rank Equivalence Table**

Table 1-1 shows the rank equivalence between members of the Civil Service and members of the British Armed Forces. Senior leadership grades are serial numbers 1-4, leadership grades are serial numbers 5-6, management grades are serial numbers 7-8 and administrative grades are serial numbers 9-11.

The groups in DE&S were observed during the course of the research to have many similarities to the groups that comprised the DPA and the DLO, the organisations that had preceded DE&S. Many of those groups were located in the same geographical locations where they had always been, until Ensleigh, Foxhill and other geographical locations outside Bristol were closed down between 2010-2012.<sup>11</sup> Some other groups moved into DE&S organisationally from Portsmouth, but there was no re-location of staff from Portsmouth to Bristol as there was with staff from, for example, Andover. Some DE&S staff remained in the locations where they had worked previously, such as naval bases and other depots.

The functional groups in DE&S used many of the same organisational processes that they had always used, whether they had been in the DPA or the DLO, even though other processes were implemented by the new DE&S. They also supplied the same customers, '*The Front Line*',<sup>12</sup> with the same equipment, purchased from the same suppliers. It might therefore be asked, '*what changed when DE&S was created?*' And many members of DE&S did indeed ask that question. This research answers that question in Chapters four and five. Within DE&S, as in any

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<sup>10</sup> Warrant Officer 2<sup>nd</sup> Class.

<sup>11</sup> Some groups from Andover and Wyton were also moved to Abbeywood during this period.

<sup>12</sup> The Armed Services and Front Line Commands of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

large organisation, there were many different groups with distinct differences between them.

Each formally legitimised group was observed to possess its own ways of doing things, symbols, and subtleties of group language.

The linguistic subtleties described in this research could be described as organisational dialects. Examples of this were “*Jack-speak*” (Jolly, 2008b) or ‘*MOD-speak*’<sup>13</sup> and these could be described as manifestations of in-group language. Each group was also seen to possess their own symbols of social identity, for example, the lanyards or badges that signified affiliation with an Operating Centre, team or equipment. Photography was used to capture and present these manifestations of personal, group, and geographic identity, as shown in Chapter 4.

Five major formal groups and group identities were recognized within DE&S. Those identities were the British Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, the Civil Service and also contractors and industry personnel. These groups existed in addition to and quite separately from the formal structure of the Operating Centres, in that all the personnel within each Operating Centre were members of one of these other groups in addition to being a member of the Operating Centre, no matter how transient that membership may have been.

Within each of these major groups, there were numerous sub-groups. Each of these sub-groups possessed individual, specific, and sometimes overlapping manifestations of social and personal identity, some of which may have been influenced by their primary service. In the Army, for example, Thornberrow (2001) and Cooke (2008) separately identified that there was a strong identification between individuals according to cap badge. In the RAF, there appeared to be a strong distinction between ground-crew and air-crew, squadron, and aircraft type. In the Royal Navy, the groups identified themselves by

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<sup>13</sup> A pejorative term for closed group Civil Service jargon.

speciality and service, or the distinction between small ships and large ships and surface ships and submarines.

In 2012, Kirke completed a separate cross-cultural study within the MOD, that identified the group characterisations that group members used to create boundaries between themselves and other groups (Kirke, 2012). He found that the British Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy all exhibited inter-service rivalry; the inter-services sports competitions being one of the formal manifestation of this rivalry. Within the Civil Service, distinctions between groups were made at a high level by role, profession or function, for example, engineer, accountant, commercial or project manager, as well as by Operating Centre or Role Team.

Some of these groups were formally constituted and others were informal self-forming and self-organising groups. These self-forming groups formed around personal interest, such as the smokers or football team supporters. These groups were multi-faceted and could appear and disappear very quickly. An example is the Abbeywood Field Gun Crew, which formed every year from new and consisted of military personnel who were the only people allowed to crew the Field Gun, both in practices and in the competition itself (MOD, 2013b) and civil servants who were only allowed to act as support crew.

There has been much work carried out on group identity in organisations and communities see for example Smeltzer and Flores (1986), Ellemers (2005), Haslam (2003b), (2001 ), Joenson (2008), Livingstone et al. (2011), Mael and Ashforth (1995), and Samuels (2009). It appears, however, that there has been no published study of this type and level of academic enquiry carried out in DE&S. However there was an unpublished study by Kirke (2007a), which was a small pilot for future work which was not funded. This was later used to support a paper on organisational culture and defence acquisition in the MOD (Kirke, 2010). However, organisational culture has been a regular topic for MBA (Masters of Business Administration) and also Defence Acquisition Management MSc dissertations, for example, Bain (2008), discusses the 'tribes' and their cultural differences within one Operating Centre within the DPA.

In relation to organisational culture in the wider MOD, in 2012, the following was published in a Ministry of Defence in-house magazine:

‘Interviewer: “*How do you see the link between civilians and military, with all the change do you think we might become poor relations?*”’

*“I guess this is a tribal thing, each of the services compares themselves to the other two, and we civilians compare ourselves to them. That is human nature isn't it?”* (MOD, 2011)

This study provides a unique opportunity to investigate elements of the organisational culture of DE&S.

DE&S was a closed organisation with a consistent turnover of military personnel that was itself unique within the United Kingdom and had not been researched extensively or in any depth before. The research is an insider investigation of factors that affected the DE&S organisational culture and the behaviours of the groups of which the researcher was a both a member, and also an observer, of.

In terms of identities, the researcher was a substantive civil servant and performed a dual role as both a civil servant and as a researcher. The genesis of this research occurred when the researcher took up a post in the Ministry of Defence (MOD) at the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA), at Abbeywood in 2005. The following extract is from a conversation that the researcher had with a military officer. It shows that the creation of “*the other*”, as described by for example, Goffman (1959:p 18), co-existed alongside other forms of loyalty within the DPA:

‘The respondent approached my team with a question about contracting for capability, another Integrated Project Team (IPT) had, the previous week, sent the team a report on their work on that subject. I, [the researcher] told him this and gave him the name of the person to contact. His reply was surprising, *‘I am not going to talk to them, what do they know, they are the RAF, we are the Army’* (Shaw, 2005).

The researcher concluded at that time, that perhaps the inter-group behaviours that he observed in the DPA were affecting the organisation's ability to share lessons, the facilitation of which was the core functional and professional role of the researcher at that time.<sup>14</sup>

The desire to investigate to investigate the background to these behaviours lies at the heart of this research. On observing the behaviours shown in the anecdote above, the researcher started to ask questions about what might be causing those behaviours.

Was it the fact that the groups were visibly different; for example, through the wearing of uniforms, something that appeared to accentuate their differences? Difference through dress and its effect on identity was described in a general sense by Lurie (1981) in her research on clothing and identity, and also within DE&S by Sims (2010 unpublished) and separately (Bain, 2008).<sup>15</sup> Reactions to clothing in Nursing organisations were also described by, for example, Kluger and Rafaeli (1998) and also Rafaeli and Pratt (1993). Perhaps the behaviours were generated by, as Dean (1984) describes, socialisation and team-building practices? Or perhaps the behaviours that were generated were a combination of these visible elements and something else that was less obvious?

It was therefore, as a result of the researcher's inquisitiveness that the research that subsequently developed from questions like these took a "pragmademic" form, as described by Patching (1990). This can be defined as a way of solving a business problem through the use of academic research, ethnography and the reflective practice of the manager.

Thus, the manager became a researcher, and in so doing, informed his own management practice, by carrying out an insider led, ethnographic study.

There were many factors that might have warranted consideration during this research.

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<sup>14</sup> As team leader of the Learning From Experience team in the DPA.

<sup>15</sup> Sims and Bain remain unpublished.



Was there, as Bourdieu (2007) described, something influencing the vernacular language of the groups, that turned both the DPA and the DLO and then DE&S into self-styled *tribal* organisations, organisations that would often work for their own good, rather than for that of DE&S, or MOD, and that protected themselves and their resources? (The Stationery Office, 2012a).

Was it the Integrated Project Team structure that was the cause of the behaviour? After all, in the vernacular, these teams were jokingly called '*Isolated Project Teams*'. These and other questions that underpin this research are contained in Appendix A.

The aim of this research was to answer the research question by reporting the results of the research that was carried out between 2008 and 2014 within DE&S. The research that supports this research was undertaken by working within the boundaries of social science, using techniques from social sciences to study the organisational culture of DE&S, its groups, and its members. The study spans the boundaries of the disciplines of social anthropology, sociology, evolutionary anthropology, and management theory. The research applied the theoretical frameworks of these disciplines to identify how a series of factors affected the organisational culture of DE&S.

A series of explanations were developed that described the effects that the factors under investigation had on group behaviour and organisational culture in DE&S. These explanations are presented, analysed and discussed in Chapters 4 through to 8. There appeared to be a multiplicity of factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S. Therefore, the use of a multi-factorial, multi-method approach to the research was chosen, an approach that can be likened to visiting an optician.

One's vision is blurry, one knows something is wrong, but not exactly what the problem is. The optician puts a heavy frame on your face and then puts a lens into the frame, you can see a little better, and then another lens is put in, your vision gets even better and you get excited as the answer becomes more clear, and with the insertion of further lenses you get a better idea of what the answer

may be. The lenses in this case were the various theoretical, analytical, and methodological axes which were complementary to each other. These lenses are presented and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

### **1.1.2 Summary and Structure of the Thesis**

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the researcher's chosen subject. This is achieved through the use of a preamble and background information. Chapter 1 also contains the researcher's reasons for choosing the subject and provides background to both the subject and to the organisation that was under study. DE&S as an organisation is described, giving the reader an idea of the organisational context that the research was carried out in.

Chapter 2 contains the critical literature review.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and research methods that were used to carry out the research. The methodology includes a description of the epistemological, ontological and axiological foundations of the work. The research methods section describes the data gathering and analysis strategy that was used to support the research.

Chapters 4 to 6 report the results of the research.

Chapter 7 tests the findings and presents the conclusions.

Chapter 8 discusses the implications for other organisations, organisational design and research and also presents an agenda for future research.

Chapter 9 presents an epilogue and observations of the organisational change when DE&S was vested as a Bespoke Government Trading Entity, in April 2014.

References and a Bibliography are found at the back of this thesis.



## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 grounds the research question in existing theory. It achieves this grounding by identifying the arguments that are relevant to the thesis, thus enabling the researcher to identify gaps in the literature that the research has helped to fill. In addition, this chapter establishes the theoretical, conceptual, and disciplinary frameworks that inform the research. These frameworks make use of the sociological concepts of social identity theory, self-categorisation theory, socialisation, social and evolutionary anthropology, and organisational anthropology. They inform the conceptual framework of the research, as described by Bell (2005: p 102), which was developed through a critical review of the relevant ethnographic and sociological literature. The conceptual framework takes the elements of the theoretical framework and seeks to show how they work together to affect the organisational culture of DE&S.

The disciplinary framework takes a broad social science approach, using concepts from social anthropology, evolutionary anthropology, management theory, life course theory, and social psychology as the basis for the framework.

The literature review covers an initial survey of what others have written both of government organisations and in wider literature. It critically examines the tools and concepts that guide the research process. There were, however surprises that appeared from the data, these areas are discussed in chapter 7.

#### **2.1.1 Navigation**

Sections 2.2 and 2.3 examine the field of relevant and similar organisational and cultural studies to DE&S. Sections 2.4 onwards examines overlapping bodies of theory that are relevant to this study of DE&S.

This research took a broad social sciences approach that is theoretically and conceptually pragmatic and multi-stranded, rather than taking a narrower single disciplinary approach. It is from this multi-theoretical point of view that organisations, and groups in organisations, were discussed and compared to the groups within DE&S.

## **2.2 Studies Of and Within United Kingdom Defence, Support and Acquisition of Equipment Organisations**

Books have been written by ex-DPA senior staff on defence acquisition, but these are not academic texts. They describe the DPA in a historic and vernacular sense: see for example, Kincaid (2008). There are also very few texts or studies that have formally researched the organisational culture of UK Defence Acquisition. Weiss (2005), for example, only touched lightly on the acquisition culture within the UK Ministry of Defence. One study within the DPA was carried out by Yardley and Neal (2007) who investigated military leadership in the DPA, but that study has little relevance to this research, save that the authors identified that military personnel view a tour of duty in acquisition as a necessary evil and they therefore view a posting in Abbeywood as being transitory.

There has only been one ethnographic study of DE&S shortly after it was formed. This was by Kirke (2007a unpublished)<sup>16</sup>, in which he describes several things in relation to DE&S, the MOD and their intertwined organisational cultures, one of which is that of cultural drag which he identifies as a “*slowing down of change through lack of cooperation by the work force who tend to look back to how things were and drag their feet in transition to the new state of affairs desired by their management*” (Kirke, 2010 p 98).

Kirke does not identify whether there is an effect from this drag that might be caused if organisational processes do not change sufficiently quickly, thereby

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<sup>16</sup> A paper that was developed from this study was published in 2010. KIRKE, C. 2010. Organisational Culture And Defence Acquisition: A Key Internal Factor for MoD. *Royal College of Defence Studies*.

providing the action for socio-technical drag and causing people to be unable to change and fulfil any new organisational cultural or behavioural requirements. This omission, where Kirke takes a predominantly social view of culture, is not surprising given that Kirke is a social anthropologist, not a management theorist. Kirke also describes cultural precession, where management implement a set of processes to create organisationally positive behaviours, but the group members actually behave in different and unexpected ways (Kirke, 2010 p 98), not all of which are organisationally positive. This is not cultural drag, this is an effect of the law of unintended consequences, where an organisation implements, in this case, a change programme and either does not understand completely what it is trying to achieve, or does not understand what 'unintended consequences' may arise from the implementation.

What Kirke describes as cultural drag and precession are important aspects of organisational change that were considered in detail during the research, as this research was undertaken immediately preceding, during and throughout the aftermath of major organisational change which was the merger of the DPA and the DLO to form DE&S. (Office, 2006) What Kirke identifies as cultural drag and precession also chime with Hofstede (1980 p 27) who says that the history of an organisation constrains its options for organisational behaviour, and both history and culture may work in tandem to delay organisational change.

Kirke also carried out a study into cross cultural issues in the four services. This study (2012 p ii), which was carried out across a wide area of the MOD, identified that small team cultures tended to reward cohesive behaviour, regardless of the (multiple service) cultural composition of the teams. Kirke also identified that stereotypes were developed within Civil Service elements that spoke disparagingly, for example, of DE&S civil servants as opposed to those in Head Office (Kirke, 2012 p 14). Kirke identified what he called a site culture, which was bounded within a geographical location, such as Abbeywood or Head Office, but which also might be as small as a floorplate or side of a building (Kirke, 2012 p 17), which chimed with his previous finding from DE&S. Kirke's work, therefore,

indicates that within the parent organisation of DE&S there were cultural, social and behavioural structures that were very similar to, and may have influenced and been influenced by, those same or similar structures in DE&S.

Kirke also discusses identity and membership through the use of an “*Operating Group*”, which he defines as:

*“The group of which a person was exercising membership at any one time, which takes precedence in those circumstances over all other groups to which they belong. Thus, a member of a team in Abbeywood might have as their operating group at work the team itself, a sub-group within the team, a cross-team meeting, or a group of old friends with whom they normally eat Friday breakfast. Each group will have slightly different conventions of behaviour—different cultures—so how a person behaves will be specifically relevant to the group he or she was in at that particular moment.”* (2007a p 3)

Kirke does not give any indication of the size of the groups that he studied, but he describes identities that were fluid and changing. This fluidity of identity accords with the work of Watson (2006 p 94). Kirke develops his view of identity further by touching on group identity and associated attitudes to outsiders. He describes these attitudes as being either organisationally positive or negative, and based on stereotyping and social categorisation (2010 p 99), (see also for example Bargh. J, 2006, Norander et al., 2011, Billig et al., 1973, Engel, 2010, Tajfel, 1979, Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Kirke observes social categorisation across all of the major groups that he observed for instance, in each arm of the military services and the civil service. For example, aircrew differentiated themselves from ground crew, and finance civil servants viewed themselves as separate from engineering based civil servants (2010 p 99). This finding was repeated in his Head Office study, (2012 p iii ). Kirke also describes how individuals in a purely military environment might move very fluidly from one group to another to share knowledge (2007c), chiming

with such as Pate et al. (2010), Riketta and Nienaber (2007), Herb and Kaplan (1999), Hakenbeck (2007) and separately Ellemers (2005) regarding the existence of multiple identities, and also of the ability of group members to possess multiple, nested identities.

Geographical distinctiveness of groups was investigated in DE&S, in particular, its relationship with the nature of the architecture of Abbeywood, with its observed '*Neighbourhoods and floor-plates*'. Implied within Kirke's study is the creation of identity that was location based: a territorial or geographic identity. This finding is in line with Van Marrewijk, but also falls into the trap identified by Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010 p 3), which is one of taking space for granted when carrying out ethnographic research in organisations.

Linguistic difference is another factor within the concept of group distinctiveness see for example Bourhis and Giles (1977), Tong et al. (1999), Wenger (1998). Kirke does not explicitly acknowledge this differentiation, noting instead the existence of what he describes as banter (2012 p iii ). Kirke also identifies the visible military and civil service cultures, but he does not explicitly describe culture as an organisational trait, preferring to describe culture as a social trait. However, implied within his description is a culture that could be called the technical culture of the MOD. This set of rules functions in parallel to his descriptions of military service cultures, professional cultures, and the informal social culture of the MOD, and, by extension, DE&S.

Kirke also describes a series of behaviours that were exhibited by groups that at best could be called protectionist of their own prestige. These behaviours appeared to be exacerbated by a lack of resources, resulting in the groups fighting over resources (Kirke, 2010 p 99 ).

Kirke's studies provide the closest theoretical, methodological and organisational starting point for this research. He informs this research by showing how a methodology that is similar to the one proposed within this research, and which was used both in DE&S, and also in the MOD, can be a valid method of enquiry.



While reporting on defence acquisition before DE&S was created, Weiss (2005) superficially investigated organisational culture in the MOD, and how that affected defence acquisition. In a few short paragraphs Weiss describes three cultures in senior levels of the MOD (pp 54-59), and also some external cultures that affected the MOD, but misses the subtleties between the groupings. He also misses the barriers between the MOD Head Office in London, the DPA in Bristol, and the other regional or geographic identities that existed within MOD at that time. Weiss indicates that group behaviours, which he labelled as tribalism, affected the procurement and support of military equipment. Weiss also identifies that where-ever UK armed forces were involved in military conflict, all groups of the MOD were driven by the overriding need to overcome the current emergency, and all “*tribal differences*” were waived “*at least temporarily*” (2005 p 54). This finding chimes with Kirke who described the services’ cultures as coming together in the face of a common enemy (2010 p 99).

A separate area of literature that may have provided background to this research is that of grey literature. This consists of reports and other material of research that has been carried out for primarily government organisations but which is not openly published. This research found little material within grey literature on organisational culture within defence acquisition, either in the UK or more widely. However in terms of research on the organisational culture of the constituent parts of DE&S there is one unpublished MSc study by Bain (2008). He describes the existence of professional, functional cultures and stereotypes within one Operating Centre that were linked to task, military service, and also to symbols of dress. Those cultures were also supported by linguistic difference. Bain investigated one Operating Centre<sup>17</sup> in DE&S and provides only peripheral evidence of group behaviours that are relevant to this research.

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<sup>17</sup> An Operating Centre is a label for a domain specific group within DE&S responsible for the acquisition and support of one type of equipment, for example ‘Weapons’.

The research outlined in this study appears to be unique, as it investigates group behaviours and organisational culture in DE&S, which was a mixed military and civilian organisation that had not previously been the subject of this level, or type, of study.

One of the reasons for the lack of academic published work within organisations with mixed military and civilian staff appears to be that there have been very few researchers who work in, or with, or have unfettered access to those organisations. The difficulties of gaining access to study military groups are described by (Kirke, 2013 p 23). Higate and Cameron (2006) also indicate the issues, while Irwin (2002) describes the problems of access and rejection from a first-hand perspective. Alvesson (2010, 2012) and others also describe the difficulties of remaining objective in organisations other than the military while carrying out this type of research (see for example, Collins, 2002, Irwin, 2002).

The paucity of closely aligned prior work makes this insider research within DE&S more valuable.

## **2.2.1 Studies of Similar Organisations**

### **2.2.1.1 Introduction**

This research could be anchored in the fields of military sociology and military anthropology, but as we have seen, no substantial academic studies of organisations that are directly similar to DE&S were found. Therefore the researcher broadened the search for literature that could be applied to similar, military and non-military organisations. Military sociologists and anthropologists have largely ignored research into military/civilian organisations and their internal boundaries, preferring to concentrate on the military/civilian boundary of military operations, or the military/political/civilian boundary such as those covered by, for example, Faber et al. (2008), Gusterson (2006), Gusterson (2003), Littlefield (2000), Feaver (1996), Westerman (2005), Higate and Cameron (2006), Caforio (1998), Burk (2002), Yardley and Neal (2007), Cooke (2008) Samuels (2009),

Lefeez (2014), Irwin (2002) González (2007), Lucas (2009), Rubinstein et al. (2012), Samuels (2009).

Godfrey indicates that this lack of literature in relation to military/civilian organisations is also true of management theory when he discussed masculinity and the military (2009 p 1). In terms of organisational design and context, DE&S was, in the period between 2007 and 2014, a large bureaucracy, similar to those described by Barnard (1938) and also Merton (1968). A bureaucracy is, as Weber indicates, an organisation that is characterised with division or specialisation of labour, i.e., finance or commercial or project managers, a well-developed hierarchy, such as in the military, a series of procedures, by which, rights and duties of employees' are defined, such as Queen's Regulations, interpersonal relations based on position, rather than personality, promotion based on technical competences,(after Weber, in Furnham, 2011 p 73).

Because DE&S was composed of Military and Civilian staff, and was a government department, it was similar in some ways to the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as described by Johnston (2005). Johnston is relevant here because of the coincidence of professional identities and socialisation that military and civilian staff experienced in order to become group members. He recognises the concept of identity and especially professional identity in this context and suggests that:

*“A professional identity was generally a disciplinary norm, and it regularly occurs in other domains that were as cognitively demanding as intelligence analysis, such as medicine, aeronautics, and jurisprudence.. These other domains practice a general system of professional enculturation that progresses from a basic education program to specialized training. These training programs help to differentiate communities of practitioners from the general public, create specific and unique professional identities”.* (Johnston, 2009 Ch2 p 28).

Johnston also recognises several factors that affect group behaviour: group distinctiveness, the effects of in-group language, re-socialisation, and the creation of a separate in-group identity. These traits are also identified as professional identity discriminators and also as prestige maintenance mechanisms, confirming the work of Pratt and others, (see for example Pratt, 2003, Pratt and Foreman, 2000, Åkesson and Skålen, 2011, Atun, 2003, Bosch et al., 2006, Braithwaite, 2006, Carlisle, 2004, Chinn, 2007, El Akremi et al., 2009, Norander et al., 2011, Rudvin, 2007, Van De Mierop, 2007).

In particular, Johnston says:

*“The adoption of the word ‘tradercraft’ demonstrates the analytic community’s need to create a professional identity separate and unique from other disciplines but tied directly to the perceived prestige and cachet of intelligence operations. Adopting ‘tradercraft’ as a term of reference for explaining work practices and as a professional identity marker may seem trivial. Yet the term, and its effect on the community, had unanticipated consequences. Tradercraft purposefully implies a mysterious process learned only by the initiated and acquired only through the elaborate rituals of professional indoctrination.”* (Johnston, 2009 Ch2 p 18).

Johnston thus indicates that socialisation into a profession creates an in-group with a separate identity, which appeared to be caused by a need, rather than an accident of circumstance. Johnston’s study of the CIA is the only study of similar organisations to DE&S that was discovered, and the factors, such as socialisation and professional and function group boundaries that Johnston discovered, may be relevant to this research. But no similar study has been carried out in a British military/civilian organisation.

### **2.2.2 Implications**

The single pilot study of DE&S by Kirke (2007a) is the only study that has investigated in any way the organisational culture of DE&S. Kirke’s study

provides some background for this study, both methodologically and theoretically. this research attempts to expand Kirke's work in many ways. Kirke was a knowledgeable outsider and therefore would have been treated as such by informants. This research was an immersive insider study, and takes a wider social sciences based approach to identifying factors that may affect the organisational culture, whereas Kirke used a predominantly anthropological framework as an outsider through which he tried to gain an understanding of the organisational culture of DE&S.

Section 2.2 has examined work that is directly relevant to DE&S, or that was carried out in a military, or military/civilian domain. Works such as these provide one of the foundations for this study: the existence of and the effect that multiple factors, such as culture, identity and language, influencing influence group behaviours and organisational culture in military/civilian organisations.

This then leads this literature review to examine the wider social sciences disciplines that are known to examine elements of organisational culture and which are therefore likely to be relevant to the organisational culture of DE&S.

## **2.3 An Examination of the Relevant Bodies of Literature**

Sections 2.3 onwards examine bodies of theory that are relevant to this study, but which do not come from, or directly cover a military/civilian organisational type. The theoretical areas covered are: culture and organisational culture, groups and their attributes, metaphor within organisations, evolutionary implications for the study of organisations and finally induction and integration of group members into new groups.

### **2.3.1 Culture and Organisational Culture**

The general concept of culture is contested, both in the general sense of the word and also in terms of organisational culture. In DE&S, the word *culture* itself was observed to be used as shorthand to describe the way that the organisation and

its groups behaved. These behaviour patterns may or may not be replicated in the same way in other groups, so there is an implication that in-group members may have a common understanding of the social norms of their group, but not necessarily of other groups.

That then can become the basis of a group culture that can be shown to differ from any other group culture. The contested nature of culture is deeply rooted and has a long history. Arnold defined the concept as a term for promoting the civilised, enlightened world as was then understood, *“the best which has been thought and said in the world, and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits”* (1993 (1869 p viii)). On the other side of the debate, Tylor proposed a much wider definition, by saying that culture was *‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’* (1871 p 1).

The need to distinguish between these two definitions was repeated by Hofstede (1994 pp 4-5). In organisational terms, Hofstede suggests that cultures differ along a collectivism dimension, and that collective cultures tend to value the group, because they emphasise interdependence, and that individualistic cultures emphasise the uniqueness, responsibility and value of the individual (2005 p 32). Triandis (1994) agrees with Hofstede and further suggests that social identity and, as a result, discrimination against out-groups would be most evident in collective cultures. According to this model, the strength of emphasis on the group membership dimension should result in strong in-group identification and the tendency to favour the in-groups and deprecate out-groups; Feather (1993), see for example, Billig et al. (1973), Tajfel (1979), and Tajfel and Turner (1986).

The breadth of contemporary meanings for the word *culture* across theoretical areas can be seen in the field of anthropology, where Eriksen suggests that *“Culture refers, in other words, both to basic similarities and to systematic*

*differences between humans*” (Eriksen, 2001 p 3). Rapport and Overing suggest that “*Culture pertains to that huge proportion of human knowledge and ways of doing things that is acquired, learned and constructed – that is, not innate to a newborn child*” (2007 p 109). From sociology, Taylor proposes the following, definition, [that culture is] “*learned shared behaviour of members of society*” (1995 p 6) and Brake suggests that culture is “*learned behaviour emphasising the effects of socialisation within the cultural subgroups of a pluralist society*” (1985 p 2). Management theory, in turn through the work of Schein, suggests that:

*“Organizational Culture is the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems”* (Schein, 1984 p 3).

These definitions share one common theme, that culture is acquired and does not therefore, exist in isolation. Geertz argues from an ethnographic point of view that culture can be defined as systems of meaning which are the collective property of a group (2000 :3), thereby taking what might be described as a socio-cultural view of culture. Socio-cultural, in this instance is taken to mean the interaction of social and cultural elements of a group, Nasir (2006), Boreham and Morgan (2004), Spinuzzi (2003), see for example Kaufert et al. (1984), Penuel and Wertsch (1995), and Gregory (2009). It thus appears that culture is learned and that culture is an existing element in human groups that affects all the members’ behaviour, whatever form the culture takes. This definition includes behaviours, linguistic frameworks, informal and formal dress codes, and also other social norms. The existence of organisational rules and social norms means that an organisation must possess a technical culture and also a social culture, thus tying together Taylor’s view of the informal and formal organisation (1911).

Kirke proposes a useful definition of organisational culture in relation to the collective culture of the British Army:

*“Organisational Culture” is a specific term to describe the customs, practices and attitudes of the people within an organisation, but only while they were exercising membership of it. An organisation such as large retail company, for example has an organisational culture for the work place, but its members do not live by that organisational culture when at home at the weekends.”* (Kirke, 2004 p 11 ).

Kirke's definition of culture is useful to this research because of the intertwined nature of the military and civilian cultures within DE&S. Part of that intertwined nature revolves around shared norms. Norms according to Furnham are the unspoken, unwritten rules that guide behaviour in a group and which could be either prescriptive or proscriptive (2011 p 489).



### **2.3.2 Social and Technical Cultures**

There are several cultural concepts that have been identified within the literature on organisational culture. One concept that appears to be important and which helps to frame this research treats culture as having two complementary axes. Those axes are the socio-technical, see for example, Cummings (1978), Cummings and Srivastva (1977), Kerr (2002), Pan and Scarbrough (1998), Ropohl (1999), Sutcliffe et al. (2012), Trist (1981), (Trist, 1978) and the socio-cultural, Boreham and Morgan (2004), and also Nasir (2006), see for example Penuel and Wertsch (1995), Shankar and Elliott (1999), Spinuzzi (2003).

Trist (1978) first described the concept of socio-technical system to describe how the socio (people) interact with the technical system of the organisation. The socio-technical approach focusses on integrating the human and technical elements of organisations to complement each other at a work group level.

The socio-technical approach appears to take account some elements of the socio-cultural and the other elements that group members bring into groups, and that these technical and social requirements must be both optimised in order for the organisation and also the employees to be optimally productive (Scott, 2008 p 112). As in all systems, there are interactions and feedback loops between these systems. Ropohl suggests that the socio-technical system shapes and transfers its power to an individual and thereby changes their interaction with the socio-technical system, a process which he calls technical socialisation (1999).

In all organisations there exists the informal organisation (Taylor, 1911) which may be called the socio-cultural system, see for example Blackler (1993), Gregory (2009), Nasir (2006), Penuel and Wertsch (1995), Spinuzzi (2003). The socio-cultural system within an organisation may be of use as a complementary explanatory framework to the socio-technical within this research. That usefulness arises because the socio-technical can be used to explain the organisation as a machine of rational processes and technology, while the socio-

cultural can be used to explain the human, emotional, and informal elements of the organisational interaction, as a series of emotional, symbolic, evolutionary and, at times seemingly irrational, sub-cognitive interactions.

Groups possess culture, and people learn the norms of that culture, therefore it is also possible that when a person joins a new group they bring patterns of behaviour with them that were pre-learned in similar or even dissimilar groups, and that they are likely to repeat in their new group, see for example Furnham (2011 pp 116 - 118). These patterns of behaviour might be technical and process based, such as, for example, following an organisational process *to the letter*, as characterised pejoratively as '*being a jobsworth*' or they might be more social behaviours, where a person '*has always done things this way, and I am not changing that for you*'. Either of these behaviours might, or might not fit with the group's rules and norms at that particular time.

Other groups, such as professional groups, also possess rules and norms relating to required behaviour. They also possess common values such as: extensive training requirements, status differentials, self-regulation, institutional, and individual resistance to imposed change. As Watson describes, professional culture exists as a separate dimension to organisational culture (2006 p 260), but exists in parallel to the formal socio-technical culture of an organisation.

Therefore organisational, group and team identities and cultures do not exist in a vacuum; organisations consist of technical processes and the people that interact with those processes.

In terms of representing organisational cultures, there are a number of cultural models available to researchers, for example those proposed by Denison and others Engel (2010), Gladstein (1984), Haski-Leventhal (2008 ), Haslam (2003a), Ilgen et al. (2005), Daft (1983), Vallejo (2009), Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003), Vora (2007).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998 pp 20-27) and also Schein (1990) separately view 'culture' as constructs with internal and external attributes. These models are compatible with each other because of the way that the internal and external attributes are laid out.

But as Godfrey (2009 p 1) indicates there have been few studies on culture in military/civilian organisations, so a search for a prior cultural model that fitted this research could only find a best fit, rather than a perfect fit model. That model came from management theory and was the Competing Values Framework as proposed by Cameron and Quinn (1999). Cameron and Quinn (1999) use organisational culture dimensions and four dominant culture types: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy<sup>18</sup> to describe whether an organisation possesses a predominant internal, or external focus, and also whether it strives for flexibility and individuality, or stability and control. The competing values framework was chosen and adapted for this research primarily because the language that was used by Cameron and Quinn (1999 p 54) to describe groups and group behaviours, significantly matched the language that was observed being used within DE&S to describe what appeared to be the same phenomena.

Bastien and others suggest that culture within groups and organisations is thought to be enduring, Kirke (2007), Bastien (1992), Schein (1984), see for example Smircich (1983), McLeod (1994), Morgan and Lowry (1999). Because, as Tylor (1871) states, cultures are group phenomena, it is self-evident that when organisations or groups change, the group's culture should change. However the culture of the group or organisation might not change at an appropriate or *right* speed, Kirke calls this cultural drag (2010 p 98). This phenomenon can occur when organisations merge, for example, when the DPA and the DLO were

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<sup>18</sup> Clan: an organization that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers. Hierarchy: an organization that focuses on internal maintenance with a need for stability and control. Adhocracy: an organization that concentrates on external positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality. Market: an organisation that focuses on external maintenance with a need for stability and control (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

merged to become DE&S, and may explain why as Barton (2011) describes, organisational change has a history of failure in MOD.

### **2.3.3 Implications**

DE&S as an organisation is a group of people. This suggests that it must therefore possess some form of culture, a set of formal rules that allows it to function. These organisational rules must describe the technical culture of DE&S, but because DE&S is composed of people, there can also be social norms that those people create and adhere to in order to maintain order in their groups. Therefore as Taylor and others have identified in other organisations, there must be formal DE&S and an informal DE&S, and it remains for this research to attempt to discover it and to identify what might characterise it. Therefore, a series of questions arise from the discussion of culture in DE&S and what might that culture be.

The following questions arise were answered by this research: What are the characteristics of the organisational culture of DE&S? Is there evidence of one organisational culture in DE&S, or are there multiple organisational cultures that are affected by the functional and military organisations within DE&S? Can any difference be made between the formal organisational culture and the informal organisational culture? Is there a legitimate distinction to be made between the socio-technical and the socio-cultural elements of DE&S?

Also, are there cultural attributes of the groups within DE&S that can be characterised as being different from whatever the over-arching culture DE&S may be characterised as?

These questions can be summarised into the following question that supports the research question: Does DE&S have an organisational culture, and if it does, what are the characteristics of that culture?

## **2.4 The Study of Groups and How They are Described**

Research on groups can take any one of several approaches. One is the anthropological, Erickson and Murphy (2013), Harris (2001), Kaplan and Manners (1968), see for example Boas and Farrand (1898). A different approach is that of evolutionary psychology, as described by Nicholson (2000) and separately Dunbar and Spoors (1995), Hill and Dunbar (2003), there is also the concept of neo-tribe as described by Maffesoli (1998), Hilder (2004) and Price and Cybulski (2007). Within each of these different areas groups are described differently, even though the groups may appear to possess the same characteristics or attributes.

The anthropological concept of groups will first be described and then the descriptions that are used within organisational anthropology and organisational psychology will be examined.

The concept of the neo-tribe that is currently prevalent within management and management literature, as discussed by, for example, Cova and Cova (2002) and Dionísio et al. (2008), Moutinho et al. (2007) will also be examined.

The way that anthropologists have described groups has changed as the discipline has developed and fractured into sub-disciplines. Anthropologists predominantly study indigenous human group in the field, and indeed immersive fieldwork is viewed as being something of a rite of passage. Levi-Strauss (1963), Malinowski (2002), Gluckman (1956) and Mead (1930) all discussed, or studied exotic groups in their own surroundings. These early anthropologists were seeking social structure, and in Gluckman's case, laws (Gluckman, 2012). They came back from the field with tales of the native culture and social structure and how the people viewed their world. They all appeared to put a boundary between a western 'civilised world' and the 'uncivilised' world of the native.

In the industrial west, the study of organisations by anthropologists, and therefore the birth of organisational anthropology is acknowledged by Wright (2004 p 5) to

be the Hawthorne experiments by Taylor (1911). These experiments investigated a group of workers that was called a team, 'the team', comprising six females in one room and a separate room of males. As a result of the research the company implemented interventions in order to improve the productivity of the workers (Wright, 2004 p 9). The experiments and the research therefore were led by a managerialist agenda. The research was extended and anthropologist Lloyd Warner joined the team to use '*anthropology in 'modern' societies*' (Wright, 2004 p 6). He had previously carried out fieldwork studying Australian Aborigines. Warner and Taylor were looking at the organisation of work in the same terms as they looked at their fieldwork, which was in terms of social structures on the shopfloor. They then treated the shopfloor as a society which was interconnected socially, and that the formal organisation and the informal organisation and the social culture affected work output feeling that an engaged social culture was better for output.

Taylor's approach is relevant to this research, because it is seeking to understand factors that affect the organisational culture of DE&S, and also what social structures there may exist there, although his work was obviously in a different organisation and a completely different historical period. In the UK, and subsequent to the shopfloor experiments, Trist (1981) developed different approaches to organisation research by incorporating social psychology into the work of organisational design through the concept of the socio-technical organisation, as opposed to the traditional, hierarchical bureaucracy.

This way of thinking about organisational design raised the idea that teams could be self-organising and still benefit the organisation, rather than be passively directed by 'management'. This was the socio-technical approach (Trist, 1981, Cummings and Srivastva, 1977, Ropohl, 1999, Cummings, 1978). The socio-technical approach is seen to be relevant to this research as DE&S is a technical organisation. It is also the case that the teams that inhabit DE&S appear to have a degree of autonomy, and therefore might be called self-organising. This

research sought to identify whether there is an effect on DE&S organisational culture that might be called socio-technical.

Within organisational psychology Furnham suggests that: *“Most big and small organisations are essentially networks of small workgroups/teams that have to coordinate their efforts”* Furnham (2011 p 499). But what is a group or a team? Turner provides an insular definition of a group, it being when *“two or more individuals perceive themselves to be members of the same social category”* Hogg and Turner (1987 p 15). Brown (1999 p 3) expands on this definition by adding that for a group to be valid, its existence must be known and *“recognised by at least one other”*.

This definition, as Edwards (1999) suggests, could also include unseen groups, or secret societies, such as masonic groups, which exist, are known to exist, but which are very difficult to actually recognise, even though they may have levels of influence and projected power. Cohen and Bailey (1997) agree with Brown and Furnham, when they say that the organisation was *‘organised’* by the people who were responsible for managing the organisation to achieve the organisation’s super-ordinate goal. Brewer and Caporael, quoted in Hatch, describe groups as possessing:

*“Four fundamental configurations: dyads—two person relationships, teams—small face to face social and working groups, bands of small interacting communities and tribes—macro bands characterised by shared identity and communication but without continual face to face interaction”.*  
(Hatch, 2004 p 68).

It is interesting to note Brewer and Caporael’s use of the word *tribe* here. Deloria (1971) and separately, Neuhauser (1988), both use *tribe* to describe a set of behaviours that were negative and that they saw as being legitimised within organisations. These uses of the word *‘tribe’* appears to align in that they all express a set of cultural attributes that are predominantly negative in outcome and effect.

The formation of groups has been widely addressed in the literature, Dunbar and others describing this as sociality (Dunbar and Shultz, 2010, Krupp et al., 2008, Lieberman et al., 2008).

In organisations a discrimination can be made; people come together in groups to perform a particular function, not necessarily because they like the other group members, but because they are working together to achieve a super-ordinate goal. Gurvitch (1973 p 210) calls this coming together to achieve a goal “*functional sociality*”, this is where a group forms to perform a function within an organisational system. If this discrimination between sociality and functional sociality is accepted, a distinction can then be made between a purely socio-technical culture which exists as a result of *functional sociality*, that is, fulfilling organisational aims by its existence, and a separate, but linked, socio-cultural construct that exists within the socio-technical. The two could be complementary or contradictory depending on the overall organisational culture.

These concepts are considered to be relevant to this research and was investigated within DE&S, because DE&S is a large organisation, with both a social, informal element as well as a functional element to its groupings. This research sought to identify whether these two elements have an effect on the organisational culture of DE&S and if so, what that effect might be.

Organisations and groups are composed of individuals; therefore, it is relevant to consider how they are linked to each other. Ashforth and Mael provide a way of considering the link of the individual to the organisation. They assert that by “*crediting a collectivity with a psychological reality beyond its membership, social identification enables the individual to conceive of, and feel loyal to an organisation or corporate culture*” (Ashforth and Mael, 1989 p 85). Allport also recognises that the group could not be removed from the individual or vice versa (Allport, 1962a).

Allport (1962a) and also Ashforth and Mael (1989) indicate that groups can hold power over an individual, and that even though an individual might not physically



be a member of a group, either at all, or by having left that group, they may still *belong psychologically* to that group. This link of the person to the group is seen for instance, in the vernacular saying, '*you can take the man out of the army, but you can't take the army out of the man*'. The linking of the person to the group resonates with Turner and Tajfel's concept of the classic acceptance of groups in social psychology, where a person may identify and *belong* to that group without physically being a member of the group (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

Hoegl (2005 p 201), and separately Hackman (1987) suggest that a team is a social system of two or more people that exists within an organisational context, with an identity that is self and other perceived, and whose members have a common task, thus possessing a social identity. Hoegl and Hackman's work therefore chimes with that of Tajfel (1979), but Hoegl (2005) and Hackman (1987) also include group size, of two or above, as a factor of group behaviour in the field, rather than in an experimental context. In addition to the existence of a social system, group members have rights and responsibilities as members of that specific group.

As members, they agree to abide by the rules that form part of the group's structure, and they share a common identity. Therefore, a group exhibits a level of social cohesion, structure, and purpose, which make a group more than simply a collection of individuals. It is from this series of factors that groups develop shared norms and an observable *culture*. Furnham's (2011 p 478) definition of a group is used throughout this research to bound what a group is and does, and also to describe the attributes that a group possesses. This definition was chosen because it describes the basic characteristics of organisational groups, whether they are stable over a long period or whether they are transient, without being prescriptive.

*"Essentially, a group is made up of persons (more than two, which is a dyad) who communicate regularly, share goals, and interact with each*

*other over time, so building up affective (or emotional bonds)”*. (Furnham, 2011 p 478).

But that definition still does not identify explicitly what a team is, as Furnham indicates, “*All teams are groups, but not all groups are teams, groups can work without one another, teams can’t*”, (Furnham, 2011). In organisations the group labelling concept of ‘team’ is widely used. The difference between groups and teams can be characterised as a factor of size, a team in an organisation appears to be a single entity within a group, it must therefore be smaller than a group. This then presents a paradox; the concept label of team in DE&S as *Project Team* may consist of multiple sub-teams. These other ‘teams’ are Delivery Teams’ and ‘Role Teams’, the smallest ‘team’ in that hierarchy. By using Furnham’s definition, the only true team appears to be the Role Team, because they cannot function in isolation. The largest size of ‘team’ in that hierarchy then becomes according to Furnham, a ‘group’ because it consists of other ‘teams’ working together, and it can function semi independently. But, as with the Role Team it would not exist unless it was part of the concept of the ‘Project Team’. The Project Team is a group because it can function independently and consists of its ‘teams’, but it is called a team by its members and also by management see for example (Amason and Sapienza, 1997, Cohen and Bailey, 1997, Halebian and Finkelstein, 1993, Hoegl, 2005, Ilgen et al., 2005, Katzenbach and Smith, 1992). So what is it about the label of team and group that makes people want to use one label over another? Team appears to be a label that describes a group that comes together for a specific purpose, a football team, or a project team, and people naturally want to belong to groups. Groups form naturally, whereas teams do not. Teams have to be built, which may explain why in organisations the concept of team-building is widespread, see for example (Anthony and Janet, 2002, Salas et al., 1999, Tohidi and Tarokh, 2006). So if people naturally form groups, but need help in forming teams, a team appears to be an unnatural type of group. This may also help to explain the perceived importance of team-building to organisations, in order to overcome the unnatural nature of teams.

These formally legitimised teams perform particular functions and roles that support the superordinate goal of the organisation, Anthony and Janet (2002), Batt (2004), see for example Belbin (1982), Cohen and Bailey (1997), Denison et al. (1996), Hackman (1987), Hoegl (2005), Ilgen et al. (2005), Katzenbach and Smith (1992), Pratt (2003), and also Staats et al. (2012), Sundstrom et al. (1990), Yeatts and Hyten (1998). They comprise in DE&S multiple functional roles, finance staff, commercial staff and engineers, and also of course, military personnel in who perform various roles. Teams are therefore embedded in the socio-technical culture of the organisation, but as Taylor (1911) identified they are also affected by the socio-cultural norms of their members. Those norms may, or may not, match exactly the socio-technical rules of the group, thus potentially producing a tension between the socio-technical and the socio-cultural.

This research sought to identify if there is any tension between the formal rules of DE&S and the informal norms of groups within DE&S. It also attempted to identify if there are any effect from potential or actual tensions on the organisational culture of DE&S.

#### **2.4.1 Groups and Teams in Organisations – Form, Function and Size**

There is a large library of literature on group and team size in organisations see for example Ingham et al. (1974), Gooding and Wagner (1985), Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993), Calman and Royston (1997), and also Hirshman et al. (2011), O'Toole (2002), Cohen and Bailey (1997), Gersick and Hackman (1990), Hackman (1987), Kulik et al. (1987), Porter et al. (1975), Amason and Sapienza (1997), Bradner et al. (2005), Curral et al. (2001), Salas et al. (1999), Pearce and Herbik (2004). But there appear to be none relating to teams in mixed civilian/military organisations.

Organisations formally sub-divide into units and sections, Batt (2004), see for example Hackman (1987), Pratt (2003), Denison et al. (1996), Yeatts and Hyten (1998), Chen and Klimoski (2003), Anthony and Janet (2002), Hoegl (2005), and also Ilgen et al. (2005), Cohen and Bailey (1997), Katzenbach and Smith (1992), Sundstrom et al. (1990). Within the literature on group and team size in organisations, a distinction is made between different team types. Cohen and Bailey describe four types of team: work, parallel, project, and management teams, each of them carrying out a different function within an organisation Cohen and Bailey (1997). In contrast, Greenberg and Baron (2003) categorise formal and informal groups into sub-groups, these being command groups, such as standing committees, and task groups of individuals with particular expertise.

DE&S as a bureaucracy has many types of groups and the research sought to identify some of them, their purpose within DE&S and what effect those groups have within the organisational culture of DE&S. Gray and Starke in Furnham (2011 p 436, Table 10.2) similarly develop a matrix of attributes of formal and informal groups. They also show how informal groups in organisations often evolve naturally, containing people from differing levels and parts of the organisation who all share the common interest that brought them together as an informal group (in Furnham, 2011 p 484).

According to Watson (2006 p 95-107), the relationships and understandings of identity formed within these groups could be fluid and changing. This research investigated the effect of fluidity of group membership because people in DE&S can move from group to group, either as a new job, or on promotion, in order to see if there is an effect of that fluidity of membership on the organisational culture of DE&S.

Cohen and Bailey indicate that 82% of companies with more than 100 employees consisted of teams and that a team could be defined through interdependence of task, shared responsibility, and was an *"intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems"* (1997 p 240). Also that a *"group as a social entity*

*has shared psychosocial traits that influence its behaviours, including group norms or shared mental models*” (1997 p 245), thus sharing part of the definition of a group with that proposed by Furnham (2011). This research has sought to define what a team is in DE&S, and whether there is a discernible difference between a team and a group, and if there is whether that difference has any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S.

Table 2-1 provides comparative data from the literature on team and group sizes in organisations, so none relate to military or mixed military and civilian organisations.

Source	Size Range of Groups	Average Size of Groups	Team Type
Hoegl (2005)	High performing 3-6 Low performing 7-9	4.4 7.8	Software development
Campion et al. (1993)	6-30	15	Work teams
Haleblian and Finkelstein (1993)	None given	3.39	Management
Staats et al. (2012)	2- 4	None given	Experimental
Kirkman and Rosen (1999)	11.12-13.83 <sup>19</sup> 11.4-15.32 <sup>20</sup>	13	Work teams
Curral et al. (2001)	2-18	5	Work
Engel (2010)	5-12	Not given	Work
Cohen and Bailey (1997)	Not given	46	Work
Gibbs (1994)	3-6	Not Given	Work group

**Table 2-1 Team Sizes in Organisations**

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<sup>19</sup> Team member data.

<sup>20</sup> Team leader data.

Table 2-1 shows that within the literature on group sizes in organisations, there appears to be no agreement as to what might be the ideal size for a work-team or group. Hoegl (2005), and Hoegl and Proserpio (2004) suggest that increasing team size to more than 15 members negatively affected team performance.

This then suggests that group size becomes self-limiting internally. Hoegl also suggests that in software development organisations, the average team size was 4.4 members for the best performing teams, and the teams that performed badly were 7-9 people in size, averaging at 7.8 members (2005 p 212). He thus appears to create a core team/extended team construct, with the core being essential to the project, and the other members acting as consulting or advising and linking to other groups in a network spanning role. This is similar to the boundary spanning concept of team members that was described by Prusak (2002) .

While experimental data indicates that larger groups are better, field work suggests that smaller teams are better. But both field and experimental data all converge at  $5 \pm 2$  members being the most effective team size Hoegl (2005), and Hoegl and Proserpio (2004) do not appear to link team size to evolutionary factors, but Nicholson (2000 p 207) appears to link group size in organisations to evolutionary psychology citing Dunbar's group size theory (Zhou et al., 2005, Hill and Dunbar, 2003), but the team sizes that Hoegl and the literature describe appear to fit closely to the evolutionary patterns of stable group sizes that are proposed by Dunbar (Zhou et al., 2005, Hill and Dunbar, 2003a). The literature on the design of groups or organisations does not appear to offer any other explanation for team sizes falling at  $5 \pm 2$  other than for cognitive, work design reasons, see for example Hoegl (2005 p 212).

Also, Evans and Carson (2005) indicate that there are problems with communications, group coherence and meaning, as group sizes expand, but they do not offer any testable answers.

Hackman (Hackman, 1987) may provide the best answer to the question of what size a team should be, when he suggests that a team was the right size when it

has enough members to do the work, no more no less. Hackman then discusses how small the team should be, not how large (Hackman, 1987, Kulik et al., 1987). In terms of group size, the groups shown in Table 2-1 were all smaller than 46 members, however, Batt identified teams that were within organisations of 75 members and which were geographically co-located, and linked to a geographical area, or *turf* (Batt, 2004 p 12).

Cohen and Bailey (1997) show on a model of group effectiveness that size was a factor, but do not go into any further detail as to what caused the lack of effectiveness. Steiner (1974) also agrees that group size is a factor in team effectiveness, but again does not provide data as to the group sizes that he is describing, and what the effects might be at any given group size. The seeming lack of discussion of the effect of group size on group behaviour in organisations appears to indicate that group size was taken for granted, appearing almost as a framework within which the researchers and the researched operated, without seeing the framework and investigating group size as a potential causative factor on group behaviour.

There also appears to be a group size factor at play within systems psychodynamics. Miller (1990 p:197) describes the Leicester model of running conferences which places members into small study groups of 9-12 members plus a consultant. At the end of the conference group members are placed into smaller homogenous groups of 5-10 people to review the conference and their learning. These group sizes also match closely Dunbar's group size theory (Zhou et al., 2005, Hill and Dunbar, 2003). Also that within the main conference Faher (2004 p 77) states that "*it was not uncommon for subgroups to form or split*". Furnham (2011 p 485) also states that "*groups of more than twelve members find mutual interaction difficult and tend to split into separate groups of seven or eight*".

This splitting of groups indicates that fission/fusion as described by Aureli et al (2008) is a primary condition of group behaviour and that systems psychodynamics may be subject to cognitive bias in their manipulation of group

sizes for effect. In his investigations, Lewin (1939) cautions that experimental contexts for examining group behaviour may miss some of the essential interactions within the group, indicating that field research, such as this research, though messy and difficult, is able to provide a different level of data about group behaviour than experimental work.

Group size in DE&S, as a hierarchical organisation were investigated in order to identify if there are any patterns in the sizes of groups within DE&S and whether those group sizes have any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S.

#### **2.4.2 Implications of Group Size Literature to This Research**

DE&S is a large organisation with approximately 8,600 staff located at the single geographical location of Abbeywood and as is the case with most large organisations it is broken down into functional groups. The functional groups within DE&S comprise a hierarchy of domains that are based on function and also size, these are; Operating Centres, groups, Teams and Project Teams. In this respect DE&S is probably no different from any other large organisation. This research is interested in identifying where the concept of the group in DE&S ends, and where the concept of the team starts, and if there is a defined boundary, such as group size or function. This is because the words team and group appear to be used as shorthand to describe the concept of a group of people, number unspecified, who are formally tasked with achieving a defined organisational outcome.

The questions that were answered by this research from the literature on groups and teams include asking whether: the academic definition of groups and teams fits the vernacular labels that are used within DE&S? What are the defining characteristics of groups and teams in DE&S? And, can a discriminatory framework be applied within DE&S that allows teams and groups to be appropriately categorised?



The key question in relation to the research question then becomes: what is the effect that the groups and teams of DE&S have on the organisational culture of DE&S?

## **2.5 Evolutionary Anthropology and Psychology**

### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Evolutionary anthropology attempts to discover what it is that makes us ‘human’ (Calcagno and Fuentes, 2012). Evolutionary psychology seeks to explain how evolution has shaped the human mind and human behaviour, Dunbar et al. (2007), see for example Smith et al. (2001 p 128). Section 2.5.2 discusses the literature in these two evolutionary fields that inform this research and then considers how to apply those fields to the study of organisations.

### **2.5.2 Evolutionary Anthropology**

Cartmill and Brown (2011) suggest that language is a factor in differentiating humans from other animals and that we as humans decide what words mean, we can therefore make the meaning whatever we want it to be. Campbell and separately Hrdy, in Calcagno and Fuentes (2012 pp 187-188), argue that it is the evolution of the brain for social reasons that is the differentiator, thus chiming with Dunbar and the “social brain hypothesis” (Dunbar, 2007, 2003, 2007). Stiner and Kuhn, in Calcagno and Fuentes (2012 p 191), also argue that language is a defining element of being human, with the addition of culture as defining what it means to be a human, although they acknowledge that there is disagreement between anthropologists as to whether culture is uniquely human, (2012 p 191 ).

### **2.5.3 Evolutionary Psychology**

Smith et al. (2001 p 129) indicate that evolutionary psychology is a relatively new field, being extended from the study of non-human animals in the 1970s. This late-coming was attributed by Dunbar et al. (2007 p 2) to the combined nervousness of biologists “*dabbling in things human*” and the latent distrust by social scientists of evolutionary ideas from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A key area of the debate within the literature about the evolutionary approach to human behaviour is what that approach can, and cannot do. Dunbar et al. (2007 p 3) suggest that the evolutionary approach *“provides a theoretical framework which enables the generation of a set of concise hypotheses on behavioural responses and psychological mechanisms and subjects them to rigorous test using data from the real world”*. Dunbar’s approach (2007 pp 4 - 5) does not appear to support the notion that behaviour is directly genetically determined and that biology is our destiny, see also Smith et al. (2001p 130). One way of illustrating the difference between genetic and evolutionary is this, evolution provides human beings with hair on their heads, genetics provides that hair with different colours. Smith et al. (2001 p 131) describe genetic evolution as a slow process, and as Bowlby (2008) suggests all adaptations are solutions to recurring problems in the remote past. Therefore, we may have as Nicholson (2000), (2008) suggests, stone age brains in the information age. But as Smith et al. (2001 p 131) suggest, positive examples of supposed adaptations may be spurious, and negative examples may simply mean that the adaptation is no longer right for the new environment. Bowlby and Nicholson can also be challenged, because evolutionary psychology suggests that the *“flexibility of human adaptive systems, and the flexibility of evolved conditional strategies, learning biases and social information transfer, will produce adaptive outcomes, even in the most novel circumstances”* (Smith et al., 2001 p 131).

The evolutionary as opposed to the genetic approach can therefore be said to provide a more strategic, generalisable approach to behaviour and helps to explain *“why does the individual behave in that way and what purpose does it serve for the individual it simply assumes that an individual’s behaviour is guided by evolutionary considerations”* (Dunbar et al., 2007 p 6). Because this approach works at a generalizable, rather than at a specific level, Dunbar et al. (2007 p 7) suggest that evolutionary explanations are predominantly statistical. This approach, however, then potentially ignores the value that ethnography can bring.

The ethnographic approach can add to the statistical approach by observing and documenting the outcome and effect of the behaviours, how people view the exhibition of the behaviour in question, and what people think they are doing when they behave in that way. Therefore, as Dunbar suggests, *“it is entirely possible and equally evolutionary, for non-genetic inheritance to take place and for such non-genetic resources to be selected over time. Cultural processes can therefore have very important evolutionary effects,... in other words, understanding human behaviour from an evolutionary perspective may not require the involvement of any genes at all”* (Dunbar et al., 2007 p 9).

#### **2.5.4 Evolutionary Approach to Organisations**

Furnham (2011 p 33) suggested evolutionary that psychology had not impinged greatly on either organisational psychology, or on organisations, except with the work of Nicholson (2000). Nicholson also indicates that tribalism as group behaviour in organisations exists because humans are hard-wired to identify with groups Nicholson (2000).

Within the context of groups as units, Nicholson also suggested that because the human psychological capacity to manage personal networks and relationships is limited, once a business unit gets much beyond 150 members it becomes difficult to maintain a single communications community and therefore sub-groupings assume greater significance (Nicholson, 2000 p 207).

Nicholson (2000 pp 227-228) later references this number to the work of Dunbar, who proposes 150 members as the cognitive limit of human group size, (Hill and Dunbar, 2003). Nicholson also considers other attributes relating to group size, for example, he indicates that groups of 14 members are too large for genuine team-work, and that the 5-9 members of a *“family-sized group”* are better functioning teams (2000 p 56). One of the key concepts within evolutionary psychology that appears to be applicable to this research is that of group size and how size impacts on the behaviour and culture of the group.

### 2.5.5 Evolutionary Approach to Group Size

Dunbar's argument proposes that group size follows a consistent series of boundaries (Hill and Dunbar, 2003, Zhou et al., 2005). This might indicate that organisational design specialists think they are making a rational, intellectual decision on group size based on work requirements and load; Batt (2004), Cohen and Bailey (1997), see for example, Hackman (1987), Hoegl (2005), Ilgen et al. (2005), Katzenbach and Smith (1992), Staats et al. (2012), Sundstrom et al. (1990), Yeatts and Hyten (1998), they might actually be making the decisions they do because of evolutionary factors that are hard wired into them. In effect, they may be affected by cognitive bias, thereby predicating them towards particular, comfortable to understand group sizes as described by Dunbar (1993a), (1995), Zhou et al. (2005).

Dunbar (1993b) proposes that human communities and egocentric networks have a distinct size that is a result of neo-cortex volume and evolution. This is what he calls the social brain hypothesis (2007). Dunbar (1998), Hill and Dunbar (2003 p 63) also suggests that as a result of evolution, groups and human networks scale consistently at a factor of between 3 and 4, and are layered, hierarchical and geometrically sized 2,3,5,15,45-50, up to maximum cognitive boundary of 150. Dunbar shows that this hierarchy of group sizes is consistent across a wide range of groups, for example, archaic groups, hunter gatherer groups, religious communities, and also armies (2003 Figure 1), Hill et al. (2008).

Groups sized between 500 members and up to 2500 members become in Dunbar's terms, "*mega-bands*" and "*tribes*" (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 67). Dunbar's research into the group sizes of armies was of particular interest to this research because of the proximity of the British army physically, psychologically, culturally and organisationally to DE&S, especially as this organisational proximity was likely to have an effect on structural criteria, such as the design of DE&S organisational structures.

Hackman (1987), and also Halebian and Finkelstein (1993) indicate that groups numbering 5 members, described as a team by Cohen (1997), appear to relate to family sized groups within anthropological literature, see for example Boas and Farrand (1898), Pulliam and Caraco (1984).

Dunbar also seems to provide an answer for the communications and coherence problems in larger organisational groups that were observed by Cohen and Bailey (1997), Nicholson (2000). Dunbar et al. (1995) indicate that there are natural breakpoints in group sizes that affect communications and information flows. This again is due to the fact that as Nicholson (2000 p 207) indicates, the larger a team becomes in an organisation, the more difficult it is to communicate with all members, leading to communications within the group becoming more formal, thus presaging the development of a bureaucracy, but with sub-groupings becoming more important.

### **2.5.6 Challenging Dunbar**

Dunbar's conclusions are not, however, universally accepted, in particular de Ruiter (2011) and separately Wellman (2012), challenge Dunbar.

De Ruiter et al attempt to challenge Dunbar by suggesting that external cultural factors such as technology enable larger network sizes, this position agrees with Bernard et al. (1987), and also McCarty et al. (2001). De Ruiter seeks to provide an explanation for people having larger networks than Dunbar's 150 maximum group size. He suggests that the energy that was put into maintaining relationships was not put into the whole network, but into maintaining the right level of relationship, with the frequency and energy investment adjusted by the person depending on the need and the return at the time (2011 p 559). Therefore, while a person's network, or functional group, could be larger than 150 in totality, at any one time the 150 maximum boundary still came into play (2011 p 563).

Ironically this supposed critique of Dunbar appears actually to support his findings by agreeing with Dunbar's bounded layers, both in their existence and their sizes.

De Ruiter (2011 p 560) also acknowledges that larger groups may contain smaller groups of people, citing Layton and O'Hara (2010) in that respect.

Wellman (2012) also challenges Dunbar on network size, but a group is a different construct from a network. A group is a generally stable concept, whereas a network is a more fluid entity, and therefore group size is likely to be smaller than a person's network, especially within a technology mediated organisation as described by, for example, Bernard et al. (1987), and also McCarty et al. (2001).

Bernard et al. (1987) also expand Dunbar's group size boundaries by proposing that larger groups can form in technology based organisations.

The work of McCarty et al. (2001) supports the extended technology enhanced network sizes that were identified by Bernard (1987). These extended network sizes only contradict Dunbar with their maximum boundaries, so within the maxima and up to Dunbar's boundary there appear to be sufficient similarities to indicate a correlation, and in many cases they are network sizes, not stable group sizes. Other authors have attempted to challenge Dunbar through evolutionary anthropology, Layton and O'Hara (2010 p 10), Hamilton et al. (2007 pp 196-197) attempt to demonstrate that hunter-gatherer communities of over 1000 members existed, but they admit that these larger groups consisted of smaller interlocked groups that divided for activities.

This fracturing of groups also applies to teams in organisations and was investigated through this research in order to see whether Dunbar's concept of fission and fusion of groups (Aureli et al., 2008) around particular group sizes may be applicable in organisations in respect of both sociality (Dunbar and Shultz, 2010) and functional sociality (Gurvitch, 1973 p 210).

Therefore it could be said that Dunbar's construct, of boundaried layered groups of consistent sizes, that are part of larger personal networks appears to survive criticism.

### **2.5.7 Implications of an Evolutionary approach to Group Size in Organisations**

Evolutionary theories such as Dunbar's group size hierarchy inform this research because DE&S is a hierarchical organisation. It is composed of, at the smallest group size, Role Teams, these are part of Project Teams, that are themselves elements of Pillars or Business Units, which themselves are elements of Operating Centres and Domains. People within these groups are also hierarchically ranked by grade, which can be described as a status label.

Questions then arise and which were answered in relation to organisational design and intent, such as why was DE&S designed in this way? Was it truly deliberate, or is there a cognitive bias within the organisational design? Is DE&S built on these group sizes, layers and networks because these networks are the 'right-size' for the human brain to work within and manage? If that is the case, what happens if groups in DE&S breach these evolutionary group size criteria? Do they fragment? Can they fragment in a formal organisation? Do they become low performing, rather than high performing teams.

Also, by looking at the work of Hoegl (2005), can predictions be made on what might the optimal team size be for a particular situation in DE&S?

There is a further element of group size that appears to be unique in DE&S. That is the proximity and juxtaposition of the military and their group sizes, to the non-military groups. Dunbar found that there was consistency of group sizes in military organisations that significantly matched the evolutionary group size criteria. The group and their labels are the same in the British military now as they were 100 years ago. There is still the company, regiment and brigade structure and they are formed at approximately the same group sizes. Is the consistency of group sizes within these two distinctly different military and civilian organisations something that enables them to create hierarchies of groups that are broadly similar in size? Is it coincidence? Or deliberate design? Or is it cognitively biased?



All of these questions can be distilled into two questions that fit within the research question: Does group size have an effect on DE&S organisational culture? And, do the group sizes in DE&S match evolutionary group sizes, and thus are a result of unconscious bias, or are they deliberately designed to be that size? The hierarchy of group size, as proposed by Dunbar may also help to explain the use of the family and tribe metaphor in DE&S to describe the groups that they inhabit and the groups' behaviours. If Nicholson and Dunbar are correct, then these group sizes, because they are 'hard-wired' into people may have some effect on the organisational culture of DE&S.

## **2.6 Evolutionary Anthropology and Language**

There exists a second element of evolutionary anthropology and psychology that is relevant to this research. That area is language and its effect on group coherence through the concept of gossip. Gossip appears to be present in most, if not all, groupings and there is a long anthropological tradition that encompasses the study of gossip, as described by, for example Besnier (1989), Foster (2004), Gluckman (1968), Jones (1980), Noon and Delbridge (1993), Haviland (1977), (2010), Michelson and Mouly (2004), (1997), Emler (1994), Bergmann (1993), (1998), Michelson and Mouly (2000)). Gossip can be viewed as being positive or negative.

Jaeger (2004 p 203) views gossip as being primarily negative, and only pertaining to events and people. Wert and Salovey (2004b) suggest that gossip is a mechanism of social comparison, which allows the reduction of face to face confrontation between parties which is also as described by Dunbar (1998 p 78) who, by looking at gossip with an evolutionary perspective, views gossip more positively by indicating that it can be used for both conflict reduction and also to maintain group coherence. This evolutionary approach suggests that language primarily evolved in order to achieve both of these outcomes amongst others. In addition to conflict resolution, Dunbar, in Brown et al. (2004) suggests that the purpose of gossip is for the spread of social information or knowledge.

In terms of group coherence, Foster (2004), (2006) note that most people are actually likely to spend a non-trivial amount of time gossiping and also that not gossiping means that a person could be marginalised from the local social fabric. Foster's view chimes with that of Dunbar (1998 p 116) who suggests that modern day hunter gatherer tribes spend up to 25% of their day socialising. . Foster is in accord with Bergmann and others to a certain extent, but as a corollary, Bergmann suggests that too much gossip could also marginalise the gossipers, see for example Gilmore (1975), (1978), Bergmann (1993), (1998), Michelson and Mouly (2000), and also Slade (1995).

Networks are different from groups in that they are centred around a group of closely interconnected people, and a larger group, of less densely connected people, both to the core and to each other (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 12). In organisations Foster (2004 p 85) identified a link between status and gossip, which he saw as falling into the core/periphery pattern similar to that identified by Dunbar, *"what begins as trusted exchange in private becomes at the group level the knowledge, norm and trust boundaries of tribes, clans and cultures"*. (Foster, 2004 p 85)

Therefore, as Albrecht (2002) and others suggest, in order to maintain a group as a group, it appears that the group members must develop trust and communicate with each other, see for example, Atun (2003), Kuwabara (2007), Fuchs (1995), Mumby (1988), Putnam and Nicotera (2009), Semin et al. (2003). This could be done formally or informally and informal communication is often called gossip. Dunbar (1998 p 121) suggests that gossip is purely social and informal in nature, discounting formal conversations because these were bound by a set of rules.

By taking gossip as a purely social information exchange mechanism and removing any value statements, Dunbar defines gossip as a conversation about personal and social topics. Gossip could, therefore, be called social knowledge exchange. Gossip crosses all gender boundaries, but its labelling differs. There

is “*women talk/girl talk*” as described by for example, Brown (1990), Coates (1989), and Eckert (1990), and also men’s “*shop talk*” as described by Fine (1978), and also Rosnow and Fine (1976), or also the signalling to others about “*having a coffee together*” (Foster, 2004 p 88). Levin and others describe gossip as a sense-making mechanism, where gossip could also be the “*truth to counter the official line*” (in Jaeger, 2004). Levin chimes with Brown, who uses the label of rumour in addition to gossip to add to the linguistic tools that are available in organisational sense-making (Brown et al., 2004). This sense-making mechanism implies that there is a link between gossip and linguistic hierarchies, especially within organisations, where the management narrative differs from that of the workers.

Foster (2004 p 87) agrees that gossip aids group coherence through dyadic and larger group reiteration of group norms and social structures. Gossip and knowledge exchange of this nature therefore appear to be important mechanisms in cultural learning and stability within groups which accords with Chinoy (1961) and also Baumeister (1995) and their work on socialisation and group coherence.

Gossip, or social knowledge transfer, could also be said to act as a mechanism of social categorisation (Wert and Salovey, 2004b). Gossip achieves group coherence by forming or reinforcing an in-group, which could become a clique, against an out-group, which may be the formal team, thus creating group coherence, and fracturing it at the same time, as described by Stirling (1956). and separately by Dunbar (2004). The alignment with Dunbar and others on the transmission of culture through gossip, implies that there is a bias towards the transmission of social information. This confirms Mesoudi et al. (2006), that this type of learning is predominantly socio-cultural and not socio-technical.

It appears that no writers have considered gossip in military/civilian organisations, so this research sought to investigate whether gossip exists in DE&S, what gossip consists of in DE&S, and what effect it has on the organisational life of DE&S.

### **2.6.1 Implications of The Evolutionary Approach To Language**

As all organisations are composed of both the formal and informal (Trist, 1981, Trist, 1978, Taylor, 1911), and as Fine and others indicate, (Fine and Rosnow, 1978), Emler (1994), Foster and Rosnow (2006), Fuchs (1995)) gossip acts as a sense-making mechanism within the formal organisation. It is therefore right to ask what patterns there might be in the sense-making of the technical organisation of DE&S, and how might Dunbar's concept of social linguistic grooming apply within the technical functional organisation of DE&S. The work of Dunbar is also of interest to this research because of group size criteria and the link to the development of language as a tool of group coherence.

The questions that arise from this approach centre on the concept of gossip as a mechanism to maintain group coherence. The questions are: Are there any patterns of language within DE&S that are used in social interaction that also appear in formal interaction? Is it possible to identify the amount of time that groups and group members spend on group coherence activities?

And is group coherence enabled or improved by gossip? And is it possible to identify any measures of effectiveness of these activities on group coherence?

These questions can be crystallised into two themes that align with the research question: Does the language that is used in group coherence activity, whether it is formal or informal, have any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S, and is that effect a result of evolutionary factors or something else?

## **2.7 Groups, Tribes and Neo-Tribes**

When describing what a tribe is, earliest anthropologists indicate that a tribe refers to a 'primitive' society, characterised by proximity and kinship, acting as Giddens (2001) suggests, individual micro groups of a land.

A different interpretation of a tribe is that of a pre-state organisation, united and defined by a political direction and leadership (Fried, 1975). These are definitions of old tribes. Management theorists such as Kaplan (2007), Isaacs (1975), Friedman (2001), Price and Cybulski (2007), Emelyanov-Lukyanchikov (2004), Van der Weyden (2006), Sowell (1997), Ramakrishna (1994), Fried (1975), Prasad and Smith (2001), leadership writers such as, Logan et al. (2008) and writers on concepts of national and trans-national groupings, for example, Walzer (1992), and Campbell (2006) have all adopted the word tribe to describe particular bounded groups, both within organisations and in a wider society. This way of thinking then appears to link to the evolutionary psychological concept as proposed by, for example, Nicholson (2000), where the construct of the tribe is seen as hard-wired into humans because the concept is so widely documented.

Maffesoli (1998) moves the discussion on by suggesting that the historic concept of the tribe as being predominantly defined by physical proximity and membership by kinship could be replaced by definition that encompasses more emotional bonding, or of belonging to a collective, unstable and fluid group. This then becomes a key defining characteristic of the neo-tribe and differentiates it from an archaic or historic tribe, as members can exercise multiple memberships of their chosen tribes, chiming with, for example, Goulding and Shankar (2011), and Shankar and Elliott (1999).

In delving more deeply into what constitutes a tribe, a meta-analysis of anthropological literature from 1895 to 2012, using the search term 'characteristics of tribes', showed that old tribes and new tribes appear to generally possess the same characteristics of some form of linguistic

differentiation, some form of “*territory*” and forms of membership and symbols. Price and Cybulski (2007 p 796) provide a useful indicative table of those characteristics. But because there appears to be no single definition of what a tribe is, this then gives rise to the possibility that the word tribe is simply a conceptual model of a type of group.

There is then, a distinction to be made between what anthropologists and evolutionary psychologists call tribes, and what marketing and management literature calls neo-tribes. Dionísio et al. (2008), Moutinho et al. (2007) distinguish between archaic tribes and the thinking around them, and the fact that modern groups can also act like tribes, and can possess some of the characteristics of archaic tribes through the concept of identity. But whereas a member of an archaic ‘tribe’ possessed only one exclusive membership, a neo-tribe member may possess more than one, non-exclusive membership of groups.

Also according to Cutler,

*“Neo-tribes are the somewhat unstable, fleeting, collectives that makeup contemporary society, reflecting the need of individuals to find meaning by bonding with others. Such self-defined communities often rely on the exclusion of the other, which may be marked by overt signals such as dress and language. The continuity of the group is dependent upon maintaining these boundaries”* (Cutler, 2003 p 3).

Cova (1997 p 22) uses the word tribe to refer to a notion of the re-emergence of quasi-archaic values, such as a local sense of identification, religiousness, syncretion and group narcissism. Cova uses the word ‘tribe’ as a metaphor, by emphasising the social links and identities that are associated with physical artefacts and exchange mechanisms. These then appear to be attributes of this type of group. These artefacts can be seen to give a group a greater sense of communality. This accords with Pate et al. (2010) and Ellemers (2005), who all separately identify in their work on multiple and nested identities, a factor that appears to be a key differentiator between archaic tribes and neo-tribes. That

factor is the ability of a neo-tribe member to hold multiple group memberships at the same time, as opposed to the archaic tribe's membership being exclusive. Thus Pate and Beaumont and Ellemers, all appear to have unknowingly indicated that groups in organisations possess at least one characteristic of what Maffesoli (1998) calls neo-tribes.

The concept label of the tribe is seen elsewhere within literature, for example to describe the social structures and behaviours of football groups, see for example Vrcan (2002), Fawbert (2005), Pennings and Pascoe (2012), Bjelajac (2004), or racing groups (Fox, 2005). Dionísio et al. (2008 p 27) describe the characteristics of football tribes as including shared cult meeting places, for example, "*the ground*", thus showing territory and space as an attribute of a football tribe, combined with symbolism and symbols, such as club colours (Dionísio et al., 2008 p 28). The existence of symbols within the context of football tribes mirrors the work of Pratt and Rafaeli and their linking of symbols, symbolism and group coherence, (Pratt, 2003), Pratt and Rafaeli (1997), Pratt and Rafaeli (1993), and also Rafaeli and Pratt (2013). Symbols, space and group behaviour was investigated in DE&S through the concept of the clothing, lanyards and territory marking.

Hilder, working within the field of technical project management and using concepts from both anthropology and evolutionary psychology, indicates that "*human tribalism drives behaviour which runs counter to the needs of viability*" (2004 p 632 ), suggesting that there is a sub-cognitive, evolutionary element to the behaviour, which chimes with Nicholson (2000 p 207), in that tribalism may be a natural group-state for humans. Hilder suggests that this behaviour within organisations could be overcome by studying the tribal groups in organisations and inoculating teams against what he calls 'the disease of tribalism' (2004 p 633). He then portrays tribes and tribalism as being negative group behaviours. Hilder also discriminates between management and workers by describing the existence of the "*above tribe*" and the "*below tribe*" (2004 p 643).

Price and Cybulski (2007) also describe organisational tribes as possessing characteristics of leadership, territory, resources language, dialect or jargon, and identity, see Table 2-2 In line with this conceptualisation, Etter Sr (1998) characterises street gangs as tribes, because they possess a common language, culture, or territory, exclusive memberships and a psychological bond.

In terms of the numbers of members that these groups encompass as tribes Dunbar (2005) suggests that group size and language are conjoined evolutionary traits linking to different sizes of group as family groups, bands, mega-bands and tribes (Dunbar, 2003, Hill and Dunbar, 2003, Zhou et al., 2005).

Those combined size and linguistic boundaries match those found in organisations by for example, Gibbs (1994), and also Logan et al. (2011), (2008), Hamilton (2007). They and others, such as Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993), Hill et al. (2008), Hoegl (2005), Ilgen et al. (2005), Kirke (2002), Pulliam and Caraco (1984), and also Staats et al. (2012) all suggest that team size boundaries are organisationally contextualised. This may indicate that organisations may coincidentally create the conditions for groups to be modelled and labelled as a form of neo-tribe.



Facet	Early (Cro Magnon) Tribe	Contemporary Generic Tribe	Contemporary Corporate Tribe
Uniformity	homogeneous	heterogeneous	Homogeneous incorporate affiliation  Heterogeneous in sub-tribe affiliations
Boundary	clearly bounded	fluid boundaries	fluid organisational boundaries
Proximity	geographic	geographic	organisational
Communication	common language	common language	Unification is controlled by attention exchange between members Emphasis on shared understanding Less reliance on common national language unique industry or department language Common methods of collaboration Common communication channels

**Table 2-2 Characteristics of Old Tribes, Contemporary Tribes and Corporate Tribes. Source: Price and Cybulski (2007)**

Facet	Early (Cro Magnon) Tribe	Contemporary Generic Tribe	Contemporary Corporate Tribe
Common Leadership	common leader	common leader	A common figure of authority who typifies the value expectations of the tribe
Membership	stable	dynamic	Emotional collectiveness desires peer acceptance Membership gives value and non-members deserve sub-human acknowledge ment and treatment
Shared Social Structure	Primordial social ties blindly accept direction	Social structure Blindly accept direction	Organisational structure
Shared Political Structure	parochial	political	Corporate culture

**Table 2-3 Characteristics of Old Tribes, Contemporary Tribes and Corporate Tribes.** Source: Price and Cybulski (2007)

Generic Tribe behaviours	Contemporary corporate tribe
Entitativity or grandiose self-image	Individuals are defined by their tribal membership
Tribal shadow based on their history	Tribes record and celebrate success to reinforce their identity and value
Group polarisation	Individuals act to reinforce their self-worth, tribe protects security
Group think	Tribe offers sub-ordinate identity to sub-tribes
Information is filtered based on self-interest or an existentialist standard	Tribes communicate in a non-traditional intuitive and subjective manner
Conflict was based on politics, revenge or survival	Tribes act to secure their self-preservation if their security is under threat

**Table 2-4 Comparison of Generic Tribe Behaviours and Contemporary Corporate Tribe Behaviours**

Source: Price and Cybulski (2007)

It was found that within the prior literature that was reviewed for this research there was no clear and unambiguous definition of either tribe or neo-tribe. However there appears to be a consistent series of characteristics that can be used to distinguish between tribes and neo tribes. These characteristics are shown in Table 2-2. The context that bounds the characteristics that are found in Table 2-2 is Price and Cybulski's concept of the Information Systems tribe, a group responsible for implementing an information system within an organisation that Price and Cybulski call the 'IS tribe', a grouping that they indicate comes together to complete Information Systems projects in organisations (Price and Cybulski, 2007). The final column that they describe as the IS tribe is not included in Table 2-2 as that grouping was not appropriate for this literature review. So Tables 2-1 and 2-2 concentrate on what they describe as the ancient generic and corporate tribal corporate characteristics.

Price and Cybulski provide some useful indicators as to how a tribe may be defined, but there are some weaknesses within their characterisations. This review will firstly discuss the weaknesses. Price and Cybulski indicate that Cro Magnon tribes possessed a series of characteristics. This presented as 'fact' can immediately be challenged as there is no observed or documented history of these tribes, there is also little archaeological evidence data to support their assertion, which then becomes a belief. But if for Cro Magnon, the term historic, old, primitive or archaic is used, then observed group characteristics can be seen within the evidence, see for example Boas and Farrand (1898), Mushinski and Pickering (2000), Rink (1891), Fried (1975), and also Zhou et al. (2005), although these characteristics appear to be not definite but fluidly represented within these groups.

The characteristics of these old tribes and neo-corporate tribes appear to withstand scrutiny from management theorists as being valid and observed characteristics of group in organisations, see for example Becher and Trowler (2001), Cooke (2008), Edwards (1999), Ferguson (1996), Fried (1975), Gibbs (1994), and also Godin (2008), Isaacs (1975), Maffesoli (1998), Pickering and Mushinski (2001), Watters (2003), Nicholson (2000), Neuhauser (1988), Deloria (1971). But once again there appears to be no definitive mapping of these characteristics from old tribes to either contemporary generic or corporate tribes, even though there are some clear similarities.

Price and Cybulski also do not address the characteristic of group size within tribes and groups and the link to linguistic boundaries as Dunbar (2003), Hill and Dunbar (2003), Zhou et al. (2005) do, even though linguistic difference is generally seen as characteristic of contemporary and corporate tribes. Price and Cybulski also define a set of behaviours that can be called 'tribal'. Once again, Cro Magnon behaviours can only be surmised, but also, by substituting the terms old, or archaic for Cro Magnon some similarity may be seen with anthropological observation, see for example Gluckman (1956), (1968), Gluckman (2012), Fried (1975), Mushinski and Pickering (2000), Rink (1891). These behaviours can then

be placed into a recognisable and tested organisational framework such as that provided by for example Deloria (1971), Neuhauser (1988), Nicholson (2000), (2008) and found to be applicable in a generalizable form.

It would then appear that there is a thread of credibility, logic and authenticity that enables the archaic tribe to be linked to the neo tribe through a series of attributes and behaviours that are exhibited in certain situations when people come together as groups. But that still leaves the question, what is a tribe?

By linking those characteristics to a set of behaviours, such as those described by Price and Cybulski (2007) in Table 2-4 it appears clear that some groups in some organisations may be labelled in the vernacular as being tribal in nature.

This leaves a quandary for this research, the term tribe is not appropriate, because groups in organisations are not in a jungle, or 'old' in the anthropological sense; groups in organisations are also not perfect neo-tribes as discussed by for example, (Becher and Trowler, 2001, Bennett, 1999, Fried, 1975, Watters, 2003, Price and Cybulski, 2007, Maffesoli, 1998) because they may for example have rigid boundaries and may also not blindly accept direction.

So neo-tribe as a concept label appears to be too deterministic to describe the reality of organisational groups, the hierarchies within them and team structures. It is from this that a further definition is proposed which will be used throughout this thesis, that of the para-tribe and para-tribal behaviour.

These definitions are concept labels that can be used where in the vernacular, groups in organisations are called *tribes* or *tribal*, and also where those same groups exhibit some or all of the characteristics that are shown in Table 2-2 and Table 2-4, either in concert or separately and also to differing degrees.

The term para-tribe, or para-tribal then becomes a useful way of describing a system of observed group characteristics and exhibited behaviours where organisational groups are observed to behave *as though they were tribes*. This then encompasses a set of attributes, such as identity manifest through personal

and geographical symbols and artefacts, linguistic distinctiveness through dialect or functional language and behaviours that may consist of protecting of their own resources or super competitive behaviours.

### **2.7.1 Implications of Group Labelling**

If this study was purely anthropological, then the labelling of the concept of groups in DE&S would be purely rooted in the language of organisational anthropology, where groups are called what the organisation itself calls them, be that groups or teams. This study, however, is based on a combined social anthropology, evolutionary anthropology, evolutionary psychology and management theory framework and therefore the labelling of groups in DE&S is more nuanced than if a single disciplinary approach had been taken. As we have seen, the literature tells this research that there is little agreement across disciplines as to how to appropriately or consistently label a gathering of more than one person.

The labels that are used appear to be contextually appropriate, and that the labels employed may be appropriated for reasons of brand, fashion, or novelty. The literature on the labelling of the concept of the group informs this research by drawing attention to the questions: How do groups label themselves in DE&S? How does DE&S label these groups? Are there any differences in the hierarchy of group names within the organisational hierarchy of DE&S? What do these names signify to group members and non-group members?

Are there differences between the functional formal labels and the informal labels, and what might that mean? These questions lead to two further core questions: What is the most appropriate label for the functional aggregations of people in DE&S? And can the labels that are used in the formal and informal vernacular of DE&S be linked to any characteristics of a group that might give rise to that label being used?

Therefore the key question becomes: Do the labels that are used to describe groups and teams in DE&S have any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S?

## 2.8 Symbols and Symbolism

Schein (1992), and others propose that it is culture which provides the context that enables the meaning of a symbol to become valid and potent, see for example Schein (1992), Trice and Beyer (1984) (Pondy, 1983). Trice and J. (1993 p 86) recognizes three types of symbols: objects, settings, and performers. Uniforms, for example, are object symbols which contain specific meanings and are context specific. As Trice and J. (1993 p 86) says, their meaning and use may differ from organisation to organisation, or from time to time in one organisation. Hatch (1993) describes organisational identity as being embedded and assumptive, but which only involves characteristics that enable self-definition of the organisation or of the sub-group. Therefore, clothing says *who I am* and also *who are you?* thus enabling social categorisation. There is therefore a contradiction between the organisational elements that are consistent, enduring and distinct, and those features that are transient, such as professional, or social identities.

There is also an identity change that occurs as a result of organisational change, such as happened in DE&S, with the merger of the DPA and the DLO, and also the collocation of teams from other sites into Abbeywood. During those changes people and teams had to lose one geographic identity, assume another geographic identity and become more integrated into the core DE&S construct.

This research then provides evidence of that interaction, through the tensions between groups around organisational dress as the symbol in this context.

Culture within groups can be viewed as frames of reference that determine the meaning of a symbol or symbolic system and these symbols can be called artefacts, Hatch (1993), see for example Lurie (1981), Pratt and Rafaeli (1997), (1993), Rafaeli and Pratt (2013), (1997). One cultural artefact is organisational dress, which is defined as comprising of clothing and artefacts, for example, a name tag (Pratt and Rafaeli, 1997, Rafaeli and Pratt, 1993).



The literature consistently states that dress and uniform are important symbols in the definition of role groups and identity and that dress can also symbolise the core values of an organisation. This research considered the effect of organisational dress on the organisational culture of DE&S in particular the impact of the military uniform being worn in the civilian environment of DE&S. The research considered whether this may cause tensions between military and civilian staff, or whether it is seen as a positive symbol.

Both Gaertner (1977), and Lurie (1981) recognize that dress is also a form of symbolism. By the term *symbol*, this research uses the meaning that Trice and J. (1993 p: 86) uses, that organisational symbols are specific cultural forms distinct from the organisational language, narratives, and practices. Pratt and Rafaeli (1997) also describe hybrid identities, these are two or more identity types that would not be expected to go together. This research investigated whether there were any effects of this on the military and Civil Service identities that exist in DE&S. Hybrid identities may be competing, but are able to exist simultaneously within the same overarching cultural construct, perhaps as a result of organisational change transition. This co-existence may apply for example, as a result of the DPA/DLO merger, or the collocation of groups into Abbeywood and was considered as part of the research.

Pratt and Rafaeli (2001a), Rafaeli and Pratt (1993), and also Rafaeli and Pratt (2013) also suggest that internal contradictions may be made explicit through the provision of symbols such as dress and can be managed by such mechanisms as logos, letterheads, and badges.

For example, personal pins or badges offer a non-verbal indicator of multiple, potentially subversive identities, which may indicate a tension between the person, as an individual, and the person as a group member, and enable them to belong to one, or many social groups. Dress, therefore, as Rafaeli (1997 p 862) indicates, becomes malleable and able to present, and also to mediate conflicting personal and organisational identity requirements.

Pratt and Rafaeli and others indicate that there is a strong link between the organisational control of dress codes and group member's compliance with a wide range of organisational rules, Pratt and Foreman (2000), Rafaeli and Pratt (1993), see for example Goffman (1959), Trice and J. (1993), (1984), Bain (2008). These dress codes may be in harmony across an organisation or could represent different fragmented cultures in organisations which may result in fragmented and multiple identities see for example, Albert and Whetten (1985), Pratt and Foreman (2000), Brewer (1999), Riketta and Nienaber (2007), Van Dick et al. (2004), nested identities Pate et al. (2010), Foreman and Whetten (2002), Medrano and Gutiérrez (2001), Herb and Kaplan (1999), Hakenbeck (2007); multiple axes of identity Kirke (2007d), or contradictory identities Ellemers (2005).

Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) also suggest that members may react to conflicting identities ambivalently, but Swann (2005) suggests that what actually occurs is a process of identity negotiation. Pratt and Rafaeli, and other researchers, view dress as a symbolic concept within an organisational culture. Dress serves, in their view, two functions: the assertion of management control, and also the conveyance of identity. Lurie (1981 p 18) Pratt and Rafaeli (1997), Pratt and Rafaeli (2001b), Pratt and Rafaeli (1993), (2013, 1997) and others also state that in addition to being a method of social control, individuals could identify with a group by specific use of clothing.

They also consider that, on wearing a uniform the individual gives up the right to act as an individual, thereby allowing themselves to be controlled by the group. Identification with a group could be voluntary or forced on them by organisational norms called dress codes. This research has investigated whether there were any dress codes in DE&S, and if there are, what effect they may have on the organisational culture of DE&S.

Davis and Pratt and Dutton (in Hatch, 2004) argue from a slightly different perspective when they say dress and other symbols represent different social identities such as professional or gender identities. They also state that both of

these identities could apply at the same time. However, according to Pratt and Rafaeli in Hatch (2004 p 278), it is unclear how multiple identities play out in the context of one symbol in one organisational setting. Solomon (1985) indicates that organisations spend a lot of money on maintaining employees' dress. The MOD spends in excess of £50 million on military working dress, and approximately £5 million on ceremonial uniforms annually.<sup>21</sup> The MOD prescribes military dress through various official dress committees such as Bain (2008), MOD (2004), such as those set out by the Royal Royal Navy (2002a), Royal Royal Navy (2002b), that are reinforced by organisational socio-technical sanctions and by socio-cultural norms.

Pratt and Rafaeli (1997 p 863) suggest that dress also serves as a convenient medium for disclosing conflicting organisational issues that are less easily grasped, and that dress is also a convenient medium for representing competing conceptions of two, or more, social identities. Kluger and others indicate that clothing triggers specific behaviours in others of differing rank, Kluger and Rafaeli (1998), Varda Wasserman et al. (1999), see for example Pratt and Rafaeli (1997).

In the military, for instance, as described by Jolly (1996 p 88), when people encounter each other in specific situations, it may result in the paying of compliments such as saluting, or in a specific language being used. This in – group signalling enables those who know, or belong to the groups, to *read* the clothing, and therefore to adjust their interaction with the wearer accordingly. Lurie (1981 p 18) indicates that this pragmatic symbolism also means that casual observers or *out-groupers* would not be able to *read* these signals, thus further creating an identity boundary. In this way, as described by Gaertner (1977), visual cues could directly impact on representations of identity and subsequent bias towards that identity. Smircich (1983) goes on to describe how differing symbolic systems shape the organisational reality in different ways. Braithwaite

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<sup>21</sup> Data provided by Defence Clothing PT (Logistics Commodity Services Group). Provided in October 2014.

(2006) also makes reference to such activities in relation to group coherence in the Royal Marines, but King was working as an outsider, and only investigating one group within a much larger organisation.

### **2.8.1 Implications of Symbols in DE&S**

If, as shown, it is a characteristic of organisations that they possess symbols, then DE&S should both possess symbols at an organisational level and also throughout the organisation. Just what those symbols are and their meaning was investigated during the research. There are some lines of enquiry on symbols in DE&S that are obvious: the military possesses uniform and dress codes while the civil service does not, so what might this asymmetry of dress code and symbolism mean in terms of the effect that the symbols have on the two groups working together? Also, does the civil service possess its own symbols, and if so what might they be? Are equipment and functional outputs categorised and used as symbolic representations of a DE&S or a group identity? Is the link to the military used as a positive or negative symbol in terms of, for example, Remembrance Day services? And how do staff react to that symbolism? Can symbols be defined as either positive or divisive within DE&S?

All of those questions align into one key question that fits within the remit of the research question: Can a symbolic system of representation be identified within DE&S? And if it can, what is that system and if that symbolic system does exist, how does that system affect the organisational culture of DE&S?

## 2.9 Social Identity

Social identity theory, at its broadest, makes use of the psychological and sociological aspects of group behaviour theories. These describe when and why individuals identify with, and behave as part of, social groups Tajfel (1979 p 122).

Festinger (1954) states that identity can be expressed as being in relation to something else, such as another individual, and that the categories that an individual uses, consist of social value judgements. Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest that there is distinctiveness of the group's values in relation to those of comparable groups. This distinctiveness provides a level of uniqueness to the identity to the group itself, and that the distinctiveness of group values within an organization should be judged against the strength of group domains and boundaries. Tajfel and Turner also identify how categorisation leads to psychological distinctiveness, which arises because people want their identity to be both distinct from, and positively compared with that of other groups and individuals, in, for example Billig et al. (1973), Tajfel (1979), Tajfel and Turner (1986).

The fact that people form groups is described by for example Lieberman et al. (2008), Furnham (2011 p 479), Dunbar and Shultz (2010), and also Krupp et al. (2008). Maas and Schiller in (in Capozza, 2000 p 46) also show that people show in-group and out-group behaviours, suggesting that there is an *"initial categorisation based in-group bias"* that guides subsequent intergroup comparisons. This approach assumes that in-group favouritism is a type of initial default mode of behaviour, in line with Sherif (1956), rather than the end product of inter-group comparisons.

This default mode of in-group favouritism indicates a link to human categorisation behaviours, of 'us' and 'them', and suggests that they are sub-cognitive and influenced more by evolution than intellect. It could therefore follow that categorisation is, as Krieger (1995) states, a cognitive bias.

Similarly evolutionary anthropology and psychology has informed this research in relation to social categorisation. There are conflicting views as to why group bias occurs. Sherif (1956) takes the view that competition drives categorisation, while Billig et al. (1973), Tajfel (1979) take the opposing view that collaboration drives categorisation.

In addition to personal identity, Ashforth and others indicate that a central defining element within any group is that of collective group identity, Ashforth and Mael (1989), Balmer (2008b), Baumeister (1995), Billig et al. (1973), Brickson (2007), Brunetto Y (2002), Cunningham (2007), Dick et al. (2006), and also El Akremi et al. (2009), Ellemers (2005), see for example Festinger (1954). These writers suggest that definitions of group identity are founded on social comparison processes, where a value judgement is made in relation to that characteristic, or other characteristics that are displayed by the '*other*' group.

Louis and Pondy (1983) also describe two forms of duality of identity, one where each unit in the organisation shows both the identities of the organisation, and of the group, which they call an holographic organisation. The other type of organisation that they describe is one where each organisation shows only one identity, the multiple identities being represented by different units within the organisation. This they term an ideographic organisation.

This variation in the level of identification fits neatly to the view, previously expressed by Watson and others that identity is fluid, changing and negotiated over time and context; Ashforth and Mael (1989), Deaux et al. (1995), Desmette and Gaillard (2008), see for example Doise (1978), Duffy and Nesdale (2009), Dutton et al. (2010), Ellemers (2005), Haslam (2003b), (2001 , 2011), Hatch (2004), He and Balmer (2007), Hogg (2003), (2007), Hong-wei He. (2009), Jenkins (1999), Watson (2006).

Identity can also be managed by internally constructed language and meanings through specific formal and informal actions (and also Ashforth and Mael in

Hatch, 2004 pp 134 -160, see for example Bourhis and Giles, 1977, Tong et al., 1999).

Miller, Prentice and Lightdale (1994) indicate that there can be an attachment to other group members that is based on common identity, called collective identities. Markus and Kitayama (1998) agree that people perceive themselves in terms of the groups that they belong to, be they family, friends or of the same geographic location. People also categorise by a perceived coherence between their individual aims and the groups aims, to the extent that they become a collective aim (1998). Bourdieu (2007) and separately Douglas (1970 pp 57-72) also describe how in-groups and out-groups form and are supported, and how they are re-enforced by ritualised boundary management and differentiation activity. They describe how this activity is designed not simply to differentiate the participant from the non-participant, but also to define and reinforce the cultural limits of the group and its rule-set for harmonised social activity. It then appears that ritualised and symbolic boundary management can act to keep people in certain groups and out of others.

### **2.9.1 Implications of Identity For This Research**

Wider research on social identity informs this research because all organisations possess an identity, and that identity can be symbolic or pragmatic or both. Within organisational identities, the groups that comprise organisations each appear to possess their own identities which may be contested or agreed, and which may also be marked symbolically or pragmatically: on the person, via territory or via architecture.

DE&S is an organisation, so it can be said to possess an identity. That identity may mean different things to different people, whether they are inside, or outside of its organisational boundaries, whether they are military, civilian civil service or contractor. That identity can be seen as having a duality: is it a civil service organisation, or is it a military organisation? Is it a department of state? Or is it a

project management organisation that acts as a middleman between the politicians, military and industry 'to equip and support the armed forces'?

The research has considered what might the effect of these multiple and potentially conflicting identities be on DE&S as an organisation?

Questions then arise and which were answered on the concept of 'identity' in DE&S are such as: Does DE&S have a single identity? And how is that identity marked and maintained? And what identities are extant in DE&S and how are these group identities marked both practically, symbolically in groups and on the person? Does the existence of differing dress codes between the military and civilian staff have an effect on civilian and military interactions?

And also do staff accept the symbols that DE&S provides to mark its brand identity, thus acknowledging that they belong to DE&S or do they prefer to do something else and not identify with DE&S, but perhaps with some other construct of their work-life, thereby marking multiple identities?

All of these questions can be distilled into one question that aligns with the research question: Does 'identity' have any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S?



## **2.10 Identity and Organisational Mergers**

If groups, organisations and individuals all possess identities, then at times of organisational change, such as within a merger, it might be expected that the question of identity could acquire a different level of importance than was usual in the group or the organisation, or even for the individual. There is a large body of literature on identity and organisational mergers, Boen et al. (2007), see for example Cartwright and Cooper (1992), De Gooijer (2009), Dick et al. (2006), Giessner et al. (2011), (2006), Ilka et al. (2009), Kavanagh (2006), Knippenberg et al. (2002), Riad (2005), Terry et al. (2001), (2001), Vaara (2002), Van Dick et al. (2004), Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen (2001), Van Leeuwen et al. (2000), Hogan and Overmyer-Day (1994).

This literature indicates that the management of identity or brand within a period of organisational change can affect the outcome of the organisational change, whether positively or negatively.

Ashmore et al. (2004), Abrams and Hogg (2002), Tajfel and Turner (1986) all separately describe merging groups in an experimental context. Their conclusions show that the identity of the merging groups is often important to their members, especially as regards their self-definitional capabilities. Terry (2003), and also Haunschild et al. (1994) suggest that negative reactions to mergers may be engendered because group members are forced to lose their pre-merger identity and to adopt a new identity.

The threat that is posed to group distinctiveness through an organisational merger could be viewed as a constraint on the success of any merger and any subsequent cultural change that may be required. In the case of the DPA and the DLO this factor was investigated through the vernacular of DE&S, and group members' feelings at the time of the merger of the DPA and the DLO.

Mergers affect everyone in an organisation differently. This is often dependent on their hierarchical position. Engel (2010), Halebian and Finkelstein (1993), Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen (2001), Van Leeuwen et al. (2000), (2003) separately use case study data to show that if the *Top Team* is dismissed by the dominant group after a merger, as described by Cartwright and Cooper (1992), then this imposition of the dominant culture and identity on the acquired organisation often strengthens resistance to the merger.

Strength of identity also strengthens resistance to the imposition of the new culture and identity from the point of view of the dominated group. Van Leeuwen et al. (2003 p 248-249) indicate that in these circumstances, the original top team would be expected not to identify with the merged organisation. One approach that could accommodate these tensions would be to legitimise a multi-cultural approach to identity in the merged organisation and allow sub-cultures to exist within it. Van Leeuwen et al. (2000) argue against the imposition of a single identity in a post-merger organisation. She suggests that sub-group identities are a healthy element of an organisation which help to maintain a sense of continuity in both the dominated, and the dominant group after a merger.

Boen and many others also assume that one group would be dominant and the other group would be dominated, and that a single organisation would appear after the merger, see for example, Boen et al. (2007), Cartwright and Cooper (1992), De Gooijer (2009), Dick et al. (2006), Giessner et al. (2011), Giessner et al. (2006), Ilka et al. (2009), Kavanagh (2006), Knippenberg et al. (2002), Riad (2005), Terry et al. (2001), Terry and O'Brien (2001), Vaara (2002), Van Dick et al. (2004), Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen (2001), and also Van Leeuwen et al. (2000). They do not say how long it might take for this single organisation to emerge.

### **2.10.1 Implications of Organisational Identity and the Merger of the DPA and the DLO**

In 2007 the DPA and the DLO were merged to form DE&S. It is self-evident that those precursor organisations possessed their own identities, because they had been in existence for some time. Also the DPA and the DLO were functionally different and so possessed different functional identities: the DPA acquired equipment while the DLO supported that equipment. Each organisation was likely to have been viewed differently by its customers, politicians, industry partners and staff.

This research was carried out in the aftermath of the merger of the DPA and the DLO and therefore provides an opportunity to ask questions about the process of identity management at the time of the merger. It also provides an opportunity to ask questions about the effect that identity and its management had on staff during and after the merger.

Questions that might be asked are: What were the organisational team identities in the DPA and the DLO prior to 2007, how were they manufactured, marked and maintained? How strong were those identities? Was there any understanding of organisational identity and its place in organisational change? What measures were put in place in order to change the organisational identities of the DPA and the DLO to DE&S? Was there a concept of a DE&S identity prior to the merger, and if there was, how was that defined, implemented and managed? Then there are questions of the effect and effectiveness of the change of organisational identity on employees, customers and industry partners after the merger?

Did people identify with DPA and DLO, and if so, what did they do on the merger? Did they identify immediately with DE&S and stop identifying with their old group? Or was there a latency where it took some time for people to get used to the DE&S identity?

These questions can all be encapsulated into one question: what effect did the merger of the DPA and the DLO have on the identity claims of the employees, groups and teams.

## **2.11 Geographic Identity, Symbolic and Functional Space.**

*“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us”.*

*Winston Churchill*

There is a further type of identity that is of interest to this research. This is because of the nature of the built environment and its effect on identity as has been described by amongst others (Abel, 2010, King, 2004, Nasser, 2005, Seiler, 1984, Vale, 1992, Wegerhoff, 2008) .

There is much now written on *space*, see for example King (2004), Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010), Weir et al. (2010). This literature review considers the concepts of space as flexible, multi-use areas where identity, group size and belonging could be legitimised or subverted as they relate to DE&S and considers whether the existing literature is relevant to DE&S. This approach brings the conceptualisation and use of space in DE&S into line with a series of theoretical and academic lines of enquiry that are well established, and also within the central investigative axes of this research. There are spaces where people come together and work, such as on a floor-plate office working area, or break apart, or relax, for example in a restaurant. In addition, spaces may at any one time be functionally purposed, for example, as transit spaces or work spaces. In any organisation, this is likely to have consequences, but in the complex and hierarchical, multi-cultural organisation of DE&S, it was of interest to identify how it is manifested.

Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010 p 30) indicate that identity could be manipulated through the built space, and also through symbolic artefacts and performances. This chimes with Pratt and Foreman (2000), Pratt and Rafaeli (2001a), and also Rafaeli and Pratt (2013).

This manipulation could range from flags at entrances, or the entire look of buildings and their relationship to their surroundings. The legitimisation of team

and personal territory marking reinforces the behaviours that were identified by Van Marrewijk (2009 p 301), where people arrived early to get the best seats with no one '*owning*' a desk.

Pratt and Rafaeli, and also Hackman and others, also note that organisations could legitimise symbolic and functional use of space, and the development of a geographical or territorial identity through teams being allowed to personalise their workspace, see for example, Pratt and Rafaeli (2001b), Rafaeli and Pratt (2013), Hackman (1987), Kulik et al. (1987), Porter et al. (1975 ). This is also expressed indirectly by Kirke (2012 p 9) who describes a geographical boundary to social categorisation behaviour in the MOD.

Weir et al. (2010 p 118) describe how identity could also be discerned in decision making spaces, where the space becomes symbolised with, for example, a desk and seating placed specifically to manipulate behaviour and make visible the power hierarchy that exists within, and adjacent to that space. The power hierarchy around space, territory and the desk is especially salient in DE&S in relation to DE&S policy on the numbers of people working at Abbeywood, and how employees might react to being forced to share desks through the corporate Abbeywood desk booking system. (Trist, 1981), Trist (1978) linked space to work because work occurs within, and is guided by, the organisational, socio-technically constructed spaces, through the imposition of the socio-spatial. Within this embodiment of space and architecture is the exhibition of power and the intent of the organisational leaders with regard to what they want the buildings to say.

Therefore, as Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010) describe, how architecture and space is used and protected must be addressed if organisational research is to be truly holistic.

Therefore, space and the pragmatic and symbolic marking of territory was investigated in DE&S through photo-ethnography and the documenting of the marking of territorial boundaries and liminal spaces.

### **2.11.1 Implications of Geographic Identity in DE&S**

DE&S possesses a geographical identity that is centred on the site of Abbeywood, a site that was also historically the location of the DPA. Within that location are different buildings which house offices and various work and leisure locations, for example, the gym, cafés and restaurants as well as meeting rooms and open plan offices and floorplates. These areas can be categorised as formal and informal areas and they are all permitted by DE&S to exist. Thus the questions that arise in relation to geographic identity are such as: How is office space allocated to teams in DE&S? How is that space managed and guarded by DE&S? How do teams decide what their geographical boundaries are, and how do they manage and mark those boundaries?

Is it possible to identify different functional and cultural groups by the symbols and artefacts that they use to mark their territory? Are there any organisationally driven policies that affect the individual at their desks? Or does the organisational policy on space only affect teams at a corporate level rather than people at an individual level?

These questions can all be aligned to the single question: does geographical identity in DE&S have any effect on the organisational culture of DE&S?

## 2.12 Linguistic Frameworks: Metaphor and Organisational Dialects

*“Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation”* (Sapir, 1949).

Sapir, in that quote, appears to be addressing what Vygotsky (1997) calls the sociocultural in that Sapir indicates that language is built on the habits of the group, and that may be sub-conscious rather than deliberate.

Carnap and Schilpp (1963) further suggest that *“discussing any entity requires a linguistic framework”*, (Stafford, 2005). This indicates, as Sapir does, that frameworks are engrained into a person, and also within a culture. Therefore the more common and expedient a sign, or a framework is, the easier it becomes to forget that there is a difference between the framework and the entity. As Sapir suggests, people become unseeing of the framework, only seeing the entity (Sapir, 1949). Yablo (1998 p 249) also suggested that metaphor runs in parallel to frameworks in that metaphors can be both literal and metaphorical. It can therefore be interpreted that metaphor and language can be used within organisations in an unconscious and un-knowing way to describe a lived reality.

The study of organisations through the use of metaphor is well established, see for example Bargh. J (2006), Johnson (1980), Lakoff (2008), see also Morgan Morgan (2001), (1999). Lakoff and Johnson (1980 p 15) categorise metaphors as types, for example, orientation, happy is up, sad is down. Morgan describes culture as a metaphor, saying that *“its strengths are that it directs attention to the*



*symbolic significance of almost every aspect of organisational life*” (Morgan, 2001 p 141 ), and also, that *“organisation ultimately rests in shared systems of meaning”* (Morgan, 2001 p 142). Language can also be used to manage identity, both in strength of identity and how people relate to groups, and people use words to negotiate meaning between themselves, their peers, and the organisation (see for example Czarniawska-Joerges in Hatch, 2004 p 408).

In the wider military environment metaphors described how people relate to their groups. The first label that is often used is that of family to describe relatedness of an individual to a group. This has been documented by Jolly (Jolly, 1987, Jolly, 1996) through the construct of the wider services, and also the Civil Service ‘family’.

This research has investigated whether this type of metaphor exists in DE&S, whether there is a link to military metaphors and whether there is an effect on the organisational culture of DE&S from the existence and use of these types of metaphor.

The existing literature indicates that the metaphor of familial relationships in organisations is not wholly positive, and that its value can be determined by other cultural factors. For example, kinship and the metaphor of family can become problematic, whereas in eastern philosophy, kinship and the metaphor of family are the norm, to quote Furnham:

*“In some cultures kinship is an unqualified criterion of cohesiveness. Whereas in the west it may be considered nepotistic to employ relations, this was not always the case in the East, where blood relations are the first choice, in part to ensure group cohesion and loyalty”* (Furnham, 2011 p 487).

The effect of family metaphors on group behaviour was investigated in DE&S through the investigation of the language, structures, and roles that were used to support people, and the reactions that people had to the use of these structures.

The way that people relate to their groups through language is considered to be relevant to this research as it concerns the way that group members identify with, and relate to groups. This relatedness could be expressed through language as metaphor, such as family or tribal language, thus indicating a para-familial relationship between individual group member and the group as a whole, and the group members.

Relatedness may also be described through the use of tribal metaphors and language to signify a different relationship. Relatedness through the expression of language is hierarchically dependent, as relatedness may also be expressed through de-emotionalised task-oriented language as proposed by McDougall (1920), and separately Lakoff (2008).

This de-humanisation occurs where the group member relates less to group members and more closely with the group or organisation as a psychological and physical construct. This then appears to link to Weber's concept of bureaucracy de-humanising those that come in contact with it (Weber, 1946).

### **2.12.1 Implications of Language and Metaphor**

Organisations comprise groups of people, and people use language to describe their surroundings and their lived experiences within their groups. The language that is used may be pragmatic or it may be laden with metaphor. Therefore, this research sought to discover if any linguistic frameworks of this nature exist in DE&S. Once again the existence of the military within civilian groups would be expected to influence group language and metaphor within that group. This research attempted to identify if there is an effect on, for example, group distinctiveness, if the effect can be characterised and also the magnitude of the effect and its effect on how the group functions. Also this research sought to map and characterise languages of the functional groups in DE&S in order to characterise the extent of linguistic difference and similarity between the groups.

In terms of metaphor this research sought to identify some of the key metaphors in DE&S. It attempted to discover why they were used and what they described. Therefore the questions that relate to the research questions on the subject of language and metaphor are: Does language and metaphor affect the organisational culture of DE&S? And if it does how can that effect be characterised?

## 2.13 Integration, Induction and Socialisation

Socialisation describes the process of learning group norms:

*“On the one hand, it prepares the individual for the roles he was to play, providing him with the necessary repertoire of habits, beliefs, and values, the appropriate patterns of emotional response and the modes of perception, the requisite skills and knowledge. On the other hand, by communicating the contents of culture from one generation to the other, it provides for its persistence and continuity”.* Chinoy (1961 p 75)

Heinz (2001) indicates that socialisation occurs at several points in a person's life, for differing reasons and with differing effects. These status changes occur as a series of status configurations. Heinz (2001 p 8) suggests that the status configurations consist of variable durations of employment episodes, bounded by variable practices of induction and integration that range as Heinz indicates, from formal to informal, personal, explicit, implicit induction and also explicit socialisation interventions. In the Civil Service and armed services an employee can change role, and often status, on job change or promotion. The practice of socialisation and integration of employees into groups converges into what Feldman (1976) calls contingent socialisation, because socialisation occurs when it is needed.

Albert and Whetten, in Hatch (2004 p 90) describe configuration points as common life cycle events: birth, growth, maturity, and retrenchment. Van Gennep (2011) and also Mayrhofer (2005) describe these points as rites of passage. At each stage, ritual is enacted to transition a person from one state to another, and to demonstrate this to others, as well as to the individual. These stages and points may be, for example, puberty, graduation, gaining a first job or promotion.

Thus Albert and Whetten appear to agree with Heinz, in that they identify time points in an individual's and organisation's life-cycle when identity becomes

important, and is manipulated or changed. This point may be a merger with another organisation, as happened when the DPA and the DLO merged to create DE&S.

In organisations with all of these forms of socialisation there is only one outcome that is expected, that is, for a new group member to be able to *fit in* with their new group, and to perform a role effectively, Chao et al. (1994), see for example Clausen (1968), Feldman (1976), Fogarty (1992), Korte (2009), Van Maanen (1978), Scholarios et al. (2003), Semmer and Schallberger (1996), Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Wanous (1992) and also Sprogoe and Elkjaer (2010). None of the organisations that those authors studied were mixed military civilian organisations, although some of Van Maanen's work was carried out within a police department, so the findings are likely only to be generalizable to this research. At each of these temporal or stratified points in an employee's work life, differing elements of agency assume different levels of importance, all with the caveat of *most often occurs in this way*.

Goffman (1959), and Van Maanen (1978) suggest that the new group may also reward the assumption of a new identity in a symbolic way. Pondy (1983) also indicates that gaining a new identity is achieved through the management of symbols, traditions, myths, stories and rituals of an organisation in order to provide the new member with a compelling image of what the group or organisation represents for the individual joining the organisation.

Socialisation processes could therefore include rituals, taking the definition of ritual that Trice and J. (1993 p 107) proposes and applying that to the practice of socialisation: "*Rituals were relatively simple combinations of repetitive behaviours, often carried out without much thought, and often brief in duration*".

Trice and J. (1993 p 138) distinguishes between the investiture process that ratifies the newcomer's incoming identity, and the divestiture process, which supplants the incoming identity with a new organisationally situated identity. They recognize that divestiture involves the reconstruction of the newcomer's social

identity through the removal of symbols of previous identities. In divestiture, the group that the newcomer wants to join restricts the newcomer from external contact, disparages a newcomer's status, knowledge and ability and imposes new identification symbols. To ensure the rejection of the previous identity, the new group may proscribe and also prescribe behaviours that must be exhibited, and punish infringements of these behaviours.

According to Feldman (1976), induction is never a stand-alone practice. Where it occurs, it is always embedded within an organisational context, and accompanied by multiple layers and meanings. Feldman's view of socialisation chimes with that of Sprogøe and Elkjaer (2010), and separately Nicolini et al. (2003) who define induction as different sub-practices within an overarching notion of a perceived coherent process of induction. Sprogøe further describes induction as a socialisation process in which the newcomer learns both the culture of an organisation and also how to function in a new job. Sprogøe and Nicolini echo Chao et al. (1994), and also Van Maanen and Schein (1979), who also describe two strands of learning imbued by the newcomer. Those strands can be identified as the socio-cultural and the socio-technical as described earlier in section 2.3.2. Sprogøe and Elkjaer also note that induction provides an opportunity for the organisation to learn from the newcomer.

However, if the newcomer is inducted too quickly, then they will become enculturated too quickly, and the organisation will have reduced its opportunity to learn from the newcomer. The nuanced view of Sprogøe and Elkjaer and also Nicolini et al. (2003) enables a flexible approach to induction. The different approaches to socialisation in DE&S was investigated by this research, because anecdotally the approaches appear to produce completely different outcomes. This research draws a wide boundary around the practice of socialisation in order to accommodate the totality of explicit, implicit, and also, formal and informal practices. This view was reached because it was observed that none of the socialisation practices were found in isolation from one another. The literature indicates that socialisation can be viewed as linked systems of integrative

practice within an organisational system, being therefore characterised as both socio-technical induction and socio-cultural integration. Once again, the literature refers to research that was carried out in organisations that were fundamentally different from DE&S, so principles from the literature were applied to this research in order to identify if the results from the literature are generalizable and applicable to DE&S.

Socialisation also, according to Kirpal (2004 p 199) within the theory of work-related socialisation, assumes that work identities play a role in the integration of workers into different work settings. This integration is achieved by helping individuals to create their own role and professional place in their team and also to develop attachment and commitment to their work. Identity, attachment and commitment are reflected within the research as key themes. They were investigated through a social identity theory and social categorisation theory approach to the research. The processes of socialisation and re-socialisation are at the centre of developing an individual's understanding of, and ability to work within, the rules and norms of a group as discussed by Billig et al. (1973), and Tajfel (1979), (1986).

As a result of a critical review of the available literature this research uses a definition of socialisation that is deliberately broad, and builds on Settersten, quoting Inkeles:

*“‘Socialisation’ was used to refer to an ‘exceedingly large range of phenomena’. It simultaneously described a process, or input, external to the person, the individuals experience in the process and the end product or output”.* (Settersten, 2002 p 1).

Therefore, socialisation is defined by this research and in the context of this research, as: The socio-technical and socio-cultural processes and practices that an organisation or group uses to communicate its current or intended future socio-technical ways of working and socio-cultural rules and culture to people who are joining it, have joined the organisation or who are already members of it.

This definition allows socialisation to encompass the plethora of socio-technical organisational practices that include: induction, integration, on-boarding, team-building, and meetings. It also enables the inclusion of the socio-cultural practice that takes place in coffee meetings, in conjunction with food, and any other day to day social practices. The investigation of explicit actions within the practice of socialisation indicates that there are two axes of socialisation. These axes are: formal, or socio-technical induction into the documented rules of a group or organisation, and an informal socio-cultural integration into the norms of a group, which may occur as a parallel activity. Goffman (1959) and Van Maanen (1978) separately consider the accepting of new behaviour patterns, and also the discarding, either willingly or not, of former behaviour patterns when they describe how total and quasi-total institutions, such as the military, integrate new members.

There is a further form of socialisation, anticipatory socialisation, when a person *rehearses* for future positions, occupations, and social relationships, see for example Chinoy (1961), Dean (1984), Feldman (1976), Heinz (2006), Korte (2009), Scholarios et al. (2003), Wanous (1992), and also Wanous et al. (1992). Within a military context, anticipatory socialisation might be exemplified by pre-deployment training (Braithwaite, 2006). Anticipatory socialisation may also encompass the concept of re-socialisation, which is the discarding of former behaviour patterns and the accepting of new ones, in that respect Chinoy (1961), and separately, Johnson (1961), recognize that re-socialisation occurs throughout the human life cycle, but they treat it as a form of specialized education.

Johnson (1961) describes the importance of inculcating members of the US Coastguard with a set of values that enable the concerted response to commands, and the acting in unison without question. King (2006) agrees with him, but in the context of the Royal Marines, a corps of the British military. It is also generally agreed that people may be socialised into identifying with a group



formally, or informally, when peers tell, and repeat stories, Lauenstein (2009), see for example Morgan and Lowry (1999), Braithwaite (2006).

There are few studies of induction and socialisation into mixed military and civilian organisations, but Kirke (2007b), in his study on integrating Territorial Army soldiers into regular army units for operations, identifies that both formal and informal structures and processes are important in bringing people into groups. The existence of both enables the newcomer to become effective and trusted more quickly.

### **2.13.1 Implications of Induction and Socialisation**

The socialisation of new group members into groups can happen, as Feldman (1976) describes, in a manner that is appropriate to the circumstances where it is needed. As DE&S is composed of groups, and people move into and out of these groups, then some type of socialisation must occur in order for them to function within their new group.

It is for this thesis to show how that socialisation occurs in terms of the practice, the processes that dictate the practice, what the content of the socialisation or induction is, and the context that socialisation occurs within and what the effect of that socialisation is on groups and group members. It will also be of interest to identify if there is a distinction, or a recognition of difference between a technical induction into a role, and socialisation into a group culture. Also in DE&S there is the proximity of military personnel, so relevant questions are: are there any differences in inducting military staff into DE&S compared to civilians? Do they have expectations of a military induction? Or are their induction experiences and processes different? And what effect might that have on them fitting into DE&S and its teams?

As DE&S was created from two groups, the DPA and the DLO, it will be of interest to attempt to identify the induction and socialisation activities that were undertaken, if indeed there were any measures in place, to socialise employees

into DE&S on its creation. It was also useful to identify if there were any positive or negative effects of that socialisation, such as a reduction of, or a recognition of, cultural drag from the 'old' organisations.

All of these questions can be distilled into: Does induction and socialisation in DE&S affect the organisational culture of DE&S, and if so, what is that effect?

## **2.14 Conclusion**

The literature review has described the broad theoretical frameworks that support this research.

The literature review has also identified the lacuna that this research fills. There have been no ethnographic studies carried out from an insider point of view within DE&S, and no studies have applied these specific theoretical frameworks to study group behaviours in a mixed civilian and military defence procurement organisation such as DE&S.

This research is considered to be unique because no research of this nature, or at this level, has been carried out in DE&S, the DPA and the DLO. In addition, no studies have investigated the organisational culture of DE&S, apart from which was a small pilot study (Kirke, 2007a).

This research is therefore unique when considered on those factors alone. A further factor in the uniqueness of this research is that DE&S only existed in the form that was investigated from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, when it underwent an organisational change to become a Bespoke Government Trading Entity (BTE). Therefore the research cannot be directly repeated as the underlying organisational structures that were subject to the initial research are no longer in place.

In academic terms, this research is considered to be unique because of the theoretical framework that combined a broad social sciences approach with evolutionary anthropology and psychology, which have been used to investigate

and attempt to understand factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S. This specific, multi-factorial framework has not been used before within any organisation, let alone part of the UK government, such as DE&S.

The overarching concept that supports this research is that all of these factors worked together, in a unique way, in the unusual organisational environment that was DE&S.

This research has addressed the organisation environment gap by carrying out an ethnographic study in DE&S. This research was completed while the researcher was a full time employee, thus performing in an identity as a full time member of DE&S. In doing so he filled two gaps; one in the scholarly knowledge of organisations and organisational ethnography, and the second within the knowledge of DE&S and its understanding of its own organisational culture.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 describes the research philosophy, research methods and the subsequent implementation of the research methods and how, and why, these techniques were appropriate for the research.

#### **3.1.1 Research Philosophy and Methods**

##### **3.1.1.1 Introduction**

Section 3.1. describes the research philosophy and also the methods that were used to carry out the research and to validate both the data and results.

The term *method*, as described by Bernard (2006 p3) has multiple levels of meaning. At each of these levels, there are principles that must be addressed in order to define the direction of the research, and to add to the quality and validity of the data gathering and analysis.

The constraints that are presented in Chapter 3 mean that the ontological framework for this research had to be based on gathering data on the attributes that were exhibited by groups in DE&S.

The research was carried out in order to uncover and explain the factors that affected the DE&S organisational culture, the reasons that people and groups in DE&S behaved in the way that they did and why they self-identified as tribes. The epistemological framework used the work of Hay (2007), and also Johnson (2001) to aid the development of the research methods. This enabled the determination of the most effective methods to gather and analyse the data that were needed to complete the research. These methods were determined to be semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and observations.

The correct choice of methods was crucial because by using the most appropriate methods the most appropriate data were collected and from this there followed a

logical progression to the development of valid conclusions to adequately address the research question.

The researcher also carried his own values and opinions about group behaviours in DE&S: this is axiology in practice in the field. These values originated from the researcher's role identity at the time and also his identity prior to the initiation of the research. The researcher's values centred on a belief that groups should collaborate and share their knowledge for the good of DE&S, that is, to act corporately rather than be protective of their own position. The researcher, of necessity, needed to understand and to suspend these biases while observing. However, the researcher also needed to be able to reflect and understand how these values may have introduced any bias when documenting the results of the research in order to understand where those biases might be weakening or invalidating the results. The suspension of bias was achieved by the researcher integrating high levels of reflexivity into his fieldwork practice.

### **3.1.2 The Research Philosophy**

The research was an ethnographic study that sought to describe and explain factors affecting the organisational culture of DE&S. The techniques that were used to elicit information from informants were an appropriate mix of exploratory questions, observations and interviews. The central research approach, therefore, was one of social constructivism where, as described by Foddy (1994), one looks to see how the perceived *truth* of group behaviours and the factors that affected those behaviours, were constructed within the minds of individuals within a cultural boundary.

The research philosophy of this work is multi-stranded and pragmatic. This approach was deemed to be appropriate because by integrating appropriate qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, the researcher gains a better understanding of the phenomena that were being studied.

Therefore this research embeds triangulation as defined by Bryman (2012 p 379) because it weaves “*an approach that uses multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies*” into the warp and weft of the practice of the research.

Hay (2007 p 118) suggests that the research philosophy provides important assumptions about the world view of the researcher. In the same manner, Coffey (2000) suggests that the researcher also becomes more aware of their own identities throughout the research. The researcher’s own academic and role identities affect the researcher’s ontological view of the informants: the actors who perform within their daily work lives, the group behaviours that the research is investigating. In this research the researcher’s own identities became salient at different times, sometimes in very explicit ways, at other times much more subtly.<sup>22</sup> These areas of commonality with *at home research* are described by Ybema and others Ybema (2009), Moeran (2009), Alvesson (2010), see for example Coffey (1999), Kirke (2013) where at home ethnography often has an element of auto-ethnography.

### **3.1.3 The Research Strategy**

The process of defining the research strategy was initiated by identifying the research topic, which was investigating the organisational culture of DE&S. That then led to the research question: *What factors affected the organisational culture of DE&S?* The next step was to investigate the topic through a broad social science framework. This framework encompassed areas as diverse as evolutionary anthropology, management theory, ethnography, social identity theory, systems psychodynamics and life course theory. Complementary to this multi-faceted framework, a data gathering methodology was developed that took a predominantly narrative ethnographic approach to the research.

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<sup>22</sup> The researcher’s identity changes have been presented as a series of academic papers that are listed at Appendix B.

This narrative approach employed qualitative participant observation and interviews to give a longitudinal view of group behaviours in DE&S. The formal research period was six years from 2008 to 2014. Prior to that, from 2005 to 2007, the researcher had worked within the DPA and the DLO, and so was immersed in the pre-merger organisational cultures. Other data were gathered through the use of organisation charts that showed formal organisational structures and processes, such as group size and reporting structures. This allowed functional group sizes and organisational practices to be determined objectively, and as organisationally designed and legitimised, rather than purely as subjectively experienced.

As a precursor to the main study and in order to test the initial research methodology a pilot study was carried out in 2008. The results of, and reflections on this study are described in more detail in section 3.4.2.

The final element of the research strategy identified ways to present the narrative data as described by Foddy and others (Foddy, 1994), Bernard (2006), Bell (2005), Creswell (1998), and also Crotty. (1998). Quantitative data were used either as validating data and management information or, where group size data were used, presented as data tables and graphs.

The data analysis was influenced by grounded theory as described by Glaser (1992). Grounded theory uses as its starting point the data that has been gathered, rather than any pre-defined hypothesis. This approach allows patterns and theoretical elements to emerge from the data, thereby minimising the possibility that the researcher's own biases affect the results.

A grounded theory approach to this research enabled the identification of themes in the data and allowed those themes to be related to appropriate areas of theory. The combined use of a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach enabled an integrated narrative to be developed that tells the story of how the phenomena that were investigated affected the organisational culture of DE&S.

The factors that the research centred on were: integration, identity, language, group size, and the group behaviours that were practised and experienced within DE&S at the time of the study. These factors were chosen initially because they were the most visible factors within DE&S that may have had an effect on the organisational culture.

From these attributes a series of concepts were developed that defined more discrete phenomena, such as the group type and function and also differing levels of the formality of integration process and practice. The development of these concepts then led to the development of the theoretical elements of the research which enabled a broad grounded theory approach to be taken and which was developed methodically as the research progressed.

### **3.1.4 Ethical considerations**

*“Ethics is about moral choices. It is about the values that lie behind them, the reasons that people give for them and the language they use to describe the”* (Thompson, 2007 p 1).

The ethical framework of this research was enacted through the twin concepts of ‘informed consent’ and ‘do no harm’, as described in the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth Guidelines (Commonwealth, 2008).

The most important level of informed consent was at the individual level. Informed consent was gained from informants by providing them with a synopsis of the research. Presented with this, respondents were able to decide whether to engage with the research at all and, if so, at what level, exercising free choice some potential informants declined to take part because they did not have the time available to take part.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The most common reason for not taking part was that people did not have time. This was explicitly relayed to the researcher.



In order to avoid any harm being done to those people who did take part, permission was sought and gained from their line management for them to take part. The interrogative framework was provided to the informant before the interview, in that way they could prepare themselves to answer the questions. This was so that they could know in advance if there were any questions that they did not want to answer. In order to counter respondent's potential reservations over some of the recorded responses, the respondent was given charge of the digital voice recorder. They were instructed how to switch it off, if there was an element of the conversation that they did not want to be recorded.

At an individual level, every participant involved in the surveys and questionnaires, was asked to sign a consent form, stating that they agreed to take part, and agreeing that the data could be used for specific purposes. Permission to quote specific responses was requested separately. The consent form described why the data were being gathered, what they were to be used for, and how they were to be stored and protected. It was through the completion of and adherence to all of these processes that informed consent was achieved.

The research was legitimised ethically within the MOD, by presenting the research proposal to the MOD Research Ethics committee (MOD, 2009). Within DE&S, the research was legitimised by the consent gained from the then DE&S main board and the incumbent Director Civilian Personnel in 2009. Within the Operating Centres that were the subject of detailed study, the research was known about, through the researcher briefing the Operating Centre Directors, and it was understood that the researcher would be observing group behaviour at all times.

### **3.2 Research Design and Evaluation of Methods**

The research set out to identify factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S and attempted to provide explanations for those effects, how the factor

and the effect arose and finally to provide an understanding of how to manage those effects and factors within DE&S.

The research design therefore identified and evaluated data gathering methods that were deemed to be appropriate. Those methods fell into five broad categories: formal structured questionnaires, formal semi-structured questionnaires, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and finally observations. There was a separate method that can be seen as akin to these categories and these were serendipitous conversations or meetings that were unplanned and were discussed along with the more formal observations. Each of these methods were deployed at different times during the research when the researcher identified that the method was contextually appropriate.

These methods all fell under the broad banner of ethnographic methods, Bernard (2006), Cassell (2006b), Creswell (2003), see for example Jick (1979), and also Higate and Cameron (2006). This research was biased towards qualitative methods because it was felt that qualitative methods would provide a more nuanced result, as opposed to a quantitative approach.

This can be considered as taking an ethnographic approach to the research. Ethnographic research is the study of people in their own environment using methods such as participant observation and face-to-face interviewing. The ethnographic style that was used in this research was realist based ethnography as described by and also Reed (2005), Lareau et al. (1996). Marcus and Cushman (1982 p 29) suggest that ethnographic research '*seeks to represent the reality of a whole world or form of life*' and that was the intent of this research. Therefore, ethnographic methods were considered to be appropriate because the researcher sought to document the narrative of work life in which they, the researcher, were embedded as an insider.

Carrying out an insider ethnographic study enabled the researcher to more easily document the feelings, as well as the actions, of group members. It was for this reason also that a multi-method approach to the research was chosen. Gioia

suggests that multi-method approaches counter single method approaches that *'produce too narrow a view to reflect the multifaceted nature of organisational reality'* (1990 p 584).

Bryman uses his preferred term of mixed-methods research to indicate that *'the quantitative and qualitative data deriving from mixed-methods research should be mutually illuminating'* (2012 p 603). It is therefore from the position of wanting to produce the best results that an interpretivist, objective and pragmademic research approach was adopted as the basis for the research because of the nature of the organisation and the stance of the researcher. The researcher viewed DE&S as a system of systems and therefore a single methodological approach could have weakened the validity of the research results.

Patching (1990) used the term pragmademic to describe work that bridges the practical, pragmatic and academic domains. This term was adopted by the researcher in an effort to categorise this research. This term was used because the researcher employed a combined pragmatic and academic approach to the research question, and also to the research itself. The multi-method approach employed used both qualitative and quantitative techniques, and as a consequence of this, a variety of tools were suitable for data gathering. The creation of the original research strategy involved an examination of the research methods and tools that were available to the research, accompanied by a discussion of their suitability and place within this research. That discussion is presented in the following sections.

### **3.2.1 A Questionnaire Based Approach - Formal Questionnaires**

A questionnaire based approach to research can take one of several forms, from a wholly defined set of questions where there is no allowance for deviation from the questions, to one where the questionnaire forms the basis of an interview based discussion, with the questions being a framework through which phenomena can be explored, if appropriate, in more detail.

A formal questionnaire can be exposed to respondents via hard-copy, electronically via for instance, web-based mechanisms<sup>24</sup>, or internally via company intranets. Responses from formal questionnaires can be analysed statistically with codes and weighting applied to each question and its response.

The research approach of questionnaires lends itself to studies of large populations where average responses and outliers can be seen and analysed numerically. This can also be a strength if used with sufficiently large populations because statistical validity is maintained see for example Bracht and Glass (1968), and Healy (2000). The formal questionnaire particularly lends itself to studies within the domain of social psychology.

While using a formal questionnaire is valuable for maintaining coherence of the responses because of the tightly defined, presented and managed set of questions, it also has some weaknesses. One of those is that it can be difficult to gain contextual responses to a question as the response indicator, because the nature of the questionnaire may require yes or no answers, or a Likert scale based indicator, Brooke (1996), Albaum (1997), see for example Garland (1991), and also Mogey (1999), where the respondent is asked to rate their response to an event or question on a scale. The Likert scale is heavily used within DE&S as a 'quick and dirty' method of finding out how people feel about a particular phenomenon or event. An example is the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey, (AFCAS), an annual survey of all military personnel that acts to

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<sup>24</sup> For example, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>. (Last accessed 26 March 2015).

understand how military personnel feel about being in the military. There is a civilian equivalent to the military AFCAS, that of the Have Your Say Survey, which provides the same type of data, but for civilian staff.

In addition to being delivered electronically this type of questionnaire can also be analysed electronically as the responses can be automatically downloaded into a suitable software package for analysis, for example Minitab™ or Statistics Package for Social Scientists (SPSS)™. Electronic delivery and analysis of the questionnaire minimises the possibility of transcription error and enables the researcher to have a higher confidence in the accuracy of the results.

If the questionnaire is delivered in printed form for the respondent to complete by hand, the results must be collated by hand or scanned into a suitable analysis package. It is here that extra effort is required and it is also where the potential for error occurs within the process. Therefore, this type of questionnaire is best used within a large population, or, conversely a small population who are highly motivated to complete the questionnaire, in order to gain a high response rate or at least a sufficiently large response rate rather than an indicative response, which would be gained from a low number of responses within a large population. This type of questionnaire can also be used directly with respondents, but used in this way it can be clumsy and constraining, for both the interviewer and respondent in order to obtain consistency and reliability across the results.

A formal questionnaire was deployed in the pilot study but was not used in the main study. The discussion relating to this takes place in section 3.2, but in essence the original questionnaire was too rigid and did not identify some of the other themes that were discovered in the pilot study, and which were elaborated through observations and through a more narrative approach, which was the other technique that was tested during the pilot study.

### **3.2.2 Structured Interview**

A formal questionnaire can also be used in conjunction with an interview. In this instance the number of questions will be fewer than in a remotely delivered questionnaire, thus giving the interviewer the ability to ask more probing questions and to tease out more detailed responses as appropriate. This type of interview can be recorded for later transcription, or a second interviewer can also be used to write notes or immediately transcribe responses. In addition to documenting responses and writing field notes, the second interviewer can also ask some of the questions.

This type of questionnaire then becomes a framework of questions and, with an appropriately prepared questioning strategy, the interviewer can steer the interview to perhaps gain validation of previous responses, or to find out how widely held a particular belief is. This type of questioning format is widely used in organisational ethnography, Cassell (2006b), (2003), Geisler (1999), (see for example Jick, 1979), Parkhe (1993), and also Saunders (2007). The results that it produces can be statistically analysed by transferring appropriate responses to an appropriate data analysis software package, and also thematically by placing narrative responses into a format where they can be analysed manually by 'learning the data', or by using a software package such as NVivo™, where themes can be identified and marked electronically.

### **3.2.3 Unstructured Interviews**

A further gathering technique that was evaluated and used within this research was the unstructured interview, Corbin and Morse (2003), and also Cohen and Crabtree (2006), see for example Fontana and Frey (1994). This technique uses a general subject area as the basis of the interview. There may be one or more questions that the interviewer sets out to the interviewee, but there is no questionnaire as such. The unstructured interview allows the subject area to be explored in a very flexible and fluid manner, exploring pathways that arise out of

the questions and answers, rather than being perceived as being pre-defined by the interviewer. To achieve best results the interview should be recorded and the data transcribed and coded.

One of the advantages of this technique is the freedom that it provides to explore the research questions in some depth which might be driven by the interviewer or by a 'good' informant, see for example Seidler (1974), Van Maanen (1979), Barriball and While (1994), Chambers (1983), and also Booth and Booth (1996).

A disadvantage of this technique is that if a respondent is not 'good', has nothing to say that enlightens the research, or has an obvious agenda of their own, then this can render an interview less valuable, with the interviewer feeling that the interview is wasted, even though the interviewee may be quite happy as they 'have got things off their chest'. The unstructured interview was used in the research and also, some conversations were recorded. These in effect became unstructured interviews and were often with 'good' respondents. A further disadvantage of an unstructured interview is that it can be difficult to analyse, or even detect, common themes across several interviews. Semi-structured interviews are better in this respect, but can be more constrained in the subject matter that they cover.

### **3.2.4 Focussed Interviews**

There is one other interviewing technique that is worthy of discussion, that is the focused interview technique as described by Merton and Kendall (Merton, 1948, Merton, 1987). This technique has two characteristics that are particularly relevant to this research, those characteristics are; the participants have taken part in and uncontrolled but observed social situation, hypothetically significant patterns and background information have been analysed by the researcher enabling them to develop a hypothesis of the meaning of the situation. On that basis an interview guide is developed that includes questions that aim to obtain the most pertinent responses and data covering the majoring areas of enquiry.

The interview focusses on subjectively lived experiences of people within a particular social situation, enabling the researcher to test the validity of both their hypothesis and also of prior responses. This approach also provides a structure that enables the researcher to be prepared for any unanticipated responses that may allow new hypotheses to be developed.

Because this research is an insider ethnography it falls squarely within Merton and Kendall's criteria (Merton, 1948 p 541) of the researcher having foreknowledge of the situation and many of the situations that informants may have experienced and are communicating to the researcher. The researcher was able to devise a set of questions, found at Appendix A, that both formed what might be called a meta framework of the 'big questions', but which was able to be broken down into a series of questions that elicited subjective and real world examples of how a person reacted to and was affected by a particular social situation in rigorous detail.

### **3.2.5 Observations and Fieldwork**

The final research technique that was examined was the field work of observations and capturing the mundanity of daily life, as and also Martin (2007), Van Maanen (1988) describe it. The capturing of the phenomena of daily life within DE&S was subject to a process of maturation and development that started with the pilot study, which is discussed in section 3.4.

Observation can take many forms, from timed sampling to linear observations over a period of time, throughout part or all of an event, such as a meeting. These can be captured in field note books or more detailed note books.

Field work and observations provide the material for what Geertz (1994) describes as '*thick description*'. These observations all have one aim, which is to document the daily life of the people and the groups that are being observed.



Observation may also include, as described by Harper (2003), the use of photographs, video or audio recordings to either record for the researcher's later use a situation or symbolic representation, or they may be used to elicit responses from respondents about a situation that is historical (Harper, 2002). This documenting is carried out through the eyes of the observer and, as Podsakoff (2003) suggests, is subject to any, and all, cultural biases that the researcher may have.

Ethnographic field work may be carried out anywhere, from within a business or other organisation to a remote village, and so is not limited to a particular place. For a small sample of different fields see Fine (2009), Irwin (2002), Jehn (2004), Lareau et al. (1996), Nothnagel (1993 ), Sanger (1996), and also Van Maanen (1988), Verbeke et al. (1998).

The field in which this research was carried out was a large organisation. That organisation, called DE&S, can be characterised as being part of the machinery of government, and populated by both military personnel and civilians. As explained above, the organisation was responsible for the purchase and support of equipment to Her Majesty's Armed Services.

### **3.3 Research Methods Deployed In This Research**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Section 3.2 describes the research methods that were used within this research, how they were deployed and examines their suitability. The order that the methods are presented is governed by the perceived importance of the method to this research. Section 3.3 presents how observations and field work were deployed during the research as this was the primary data gathering method that was used during the research.

#### **3.3.2 Observation and Field Work**

The research question that this research set out to answer was: *What factors affect the organisational culture of DE&S?* To achieve this, observational data were gathered during the period of 2005 to 2014 through the researcher working in the DPA, and then working in DE&S within Operating Centres A, B and D. This research started officially in 2008, prior to which date, the researcher was a civil servant who was observing the organisational culture and group behaviours in the DPA, DLO and from 2007, DE&S as a matter of personal and professional interest.

Observational data were achieved firstly as an insider and participant observer, and subsequently, as the researcher's own identity as a researcher became more mature, they became more of an observant participant, a transition in the style that is described by and also Alvesson (2010), Kamsteeg (2008), Ybema (2009), Collins (2002).

The observations were originally captured as short notes, but as part of the maturation of the researcher's field work capabilities these notes developed into longer and more detailed field notes, diary entries moving towards thick description as described by Geertz (1994 p 6-7). Initially, the researcher kept two diaries, one a work based diary and the other field notes, but this was a clumsy

and indiscrete method of writing down observations and was subsequently rejected in favour of having a single A4 diary with observations on the left hand page and work notes on the right hand page, but once again this was clumsy and the researcher ended up with, on some days, lots of blank pages and disjointed field notes.

Eventually, a single, linear observational approach was developed, where field observations were captured as 'in line notes' in an A4 or A5 size diary that performed the function of a work diary and day book, and also a field diary. This meant that the note capture was discrete, as it looked to others as though the researcher was just keeping their work day book up to date or writing in work notes, which they indeed were, and it locked these into the context of field notes to provide a very detailed and contextually balanced record of the research and role based identities being performed at that time.

These notes were typed into MS Word™ and analysed in NVivo™, where meaningful themes and codes were assigned to them. These themes and codes were developed from the data.

Observing at this level of detail over such long a period of time has advantages and disadvantages. One advantage was that patterns of behaviour, both personal and organisational, could be identified in multiple contexts, such as in formal and informal meetings, thus enabling the researcher to identify how deeply these behaviours were embedded in the organisational culture of DE&S. Also the longitudinal nature of the observations allowed the researcher to identify whether there were any latent effects of the merger of the DPA and the DLO, and how long they remained visible within the culture of DE&S.

The primary disadvantage of this length of observation was maintaining both the standard of observation, which did improve as the research continued, but also became increasingly inter-twined with the researcher carrying out the daily tasks and thus losing stranger value as described by Cressey (1983). The researcher is absolutely certain when they look back at the observations and field work as a

reflective academic that they have missed seeing some phenomena because they were *working* and not observing. But the observational data have provided the core of the data that provides the evidence for this research and that narrative evidence is supported by photographs, both of which illuminate the questionnaire based responses.

### **3.3.3 Photographs as Ethnographic Tools**

Additional observational data were gathered using photographs to record events during the course of the research. Photo-ethnography was used for example to show visually how uniform and dress represented symbolic and pragmatic identities.

Photographs were also thought to be the most effective way of showing how territory was marked at different levels of the hierarchy throughout DE&S, as they enabled the visual explanation of the concept of a geographical identity. Participants could not be identified from these photographs. DE&S is a restricted site within the MOD, and so photography and digital recording are not permitted unless specific permission is gained. Permission was gained to use a personal digital camera to take a series of test photographs at specific locations and within a tightly bounded time span prior to tasking the official DE&S communications photographer to take a series of official photographs specifically for the research. These photographs are attributed with their source and MOD Copyright.

It is interesting to note that even though the researcher had permission to take those photographs, and publish them in this thesis taking them was a nerve wracking experience, because they knew that they were carrying out an act that was in normal circumstances illegal.

Subsequent to the permission to take photographs specifically for the research, permission was gained to use stock photographs of DE&S and also a series of photographs to illustrate the vesting of DE&S as a Bespoke Trading Entity in April 2014. These official photos are marked as Crown Copyright.

Photographs thus provided an effective way of showing symbolic and territorial aspects of a closed organisation that would not normally be seen by outsiders to that organisation.

### **3.3.4 The Interrogative Framework**

The evidence that supported this research was gained through exploration, photography and observation, organisational storytelling, individual anecdotes and the metaphors that people used to make sense of DE&S. Because observations are, by their nature, subjective and selective, the field observations were supported through the use of questionnaires, and informal semi-structured interviews.

The interrogative framework that supported the research was based around a series of broad questions that were developed by the researcher through their reflective management practice in DE&S. Those broad questions can be found at Appendix A.

Consistency within the qualitative data gathered was achieved through the use of a prepared questioning framework for interviewees.

Eighteen questions were used as a guide during the interviews, and their use provided a structured framework that sought informants' views on how they felt about group behaviour in DE&S.

The interrogative framework was built with reference to Creswell (1998), (2003), Geisler (1999) Foddy (1994), and also Weller (2007). This was based on open ended questions, using phrases such as '*what does it feel like to ?*'... And '*how you do feel about ?*' The questions were developed to examine factors that may have affected the organisational culture of DE&S as the informants experienced it. They were asked: What was happening? Why was *it* happening? Where was *it* happening? How was *it* happening? When was *it* happening and who was *it* happening to? The *it* being the phenomenon of the organisational culture and

group behaviour in DE&S. The resulting themes were identified, extracted and cross-referenced against the observational data gathered, the results of which are presented in Chapters 4 to 6.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by an audio typist into Word 2007 (™). In this format the transcriptions were put into NVivo(™) where coding and analysis was carried out.

The original research questions were tested during the pilot study and refined prior to being used in the main study in order to achieve more accurate, meaningful and comparable responses. The pilot study is discussed in section 3.4

### **3.3.5 Choosing Informants**

A number of Operating Centres were chosen as targets for the detailed research. These included firstly Operating Centre A,<sup>25</sup> a predominantly cross-cutting Operating Centre populated with mainly bureaucratic/technocratic staff, as defined by Bain (2008), of whom the majority were civil servants who had MOD-wide responsibilities. The further Operating Centres: B to J, were chosen because they were vertically integrated delivery Operating Centres, staffed by all four services, working in discrete, and predominantly single service, platform and capability-based groups. These yielded 32 sub-groups that functioned as legitimised teams within the Operating Centres that were under investigation.

This combination produced data from both project based and vertically integrated groups and also from cross-cutting corporate functional areas, thus giving the results a greater level of validity and reliability. The process for choosing informants was one of a deliberately random selection of names from the DE&S organisational directory.<sup>26</sup> For each of the Operating Centres, potential

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<sup>25</sup> Letters of the alphabet were used instead of titles to conceal the proper identity of the various Operating Centre.

<sup>26</sup> Electronic Telephone list.

informants were chosen randomly across project teams, grades, and services to ensure as wide coverage as possible within each Operating Centre and also to achieve the greatest degree of randomness possible within the sample.

Between 20-25 informants were thus purposefully chosen from each Operating Centre, all volunteers. The choosing of this number of participants was a pragmatic decision due to the factors of time available to the researcher, and time allowed by the organisation for informants to be available. Not all of the chosen respondents took part in the research.

The study population encompassed all grades of staff in the target Operating Centres, regardless of service and did not preclude commercial contractors or Foreign Liaison Officers. So that each participant knew what they were being asked to do each interview was preceded by the participant receiving a list of questions that were used to inform the interviews and provide quantitative data. This technique introduced validity and reliability at the beginning of the data gathering process. A template was created in order to make the process of contacting potential respondents consistent. This was used to contact each potential informant by email. The template included a standard introductory text that informed potential participants of the needs of the research and to request their participation. Replies were received sometimes in a matter of moments, others after a day or two.

If the initial contact engendered a positive response, a mutually convenient date, time and location to hold an interview was agreed. Each participant was allocated a unique interview number. A master list of identities was kept in a separate protected archive. This introduced anonymity at the very start of the research process. Interviews were carried out in closed rooms and recorded, each interview being planned for one hour. Some interviews with highly articulate and informed interviewees lasted 2 ½ hours, while interviews with other informants who were less articulate, or perhaps less interested, were completed in approximately 20 minutes.

Operating Centre	No of Military selected	Grade	No of Civilians selected	Grade	Location	Total
A	1	Major General	14	D/E x 2, C1/C2 x 10, B1/B2 x 2	Abw x 14, Fo x 1	15
B	4	Brigadier x 1, Commodore x 1, Squadron leader x 2	22	D/E x 8, C1/C2 x 10 B1/B2 x 4	Abw x 3, Co x 18, Cop x 2, Ens x 3	26
C	4	Major x 2, Colonel x 1, Warrant Officer x 1	19	C1/C2 x 11, D/E x 3, B1/B2 x 3, Contractor x 2	Abw x 21 Ens x 2	23
D	2	Major x 2	16	C1/C2 x 8, B1/B2 x 2, D/E x 6	Abw x 17 Gos x 1	18
E	8	Commodore x 1, Captain x 1, WO x 2, Cdr x 2 Lt Cdr x 2,	10	C1/C2 x 4 ,B1/B2 x 2 D/E x 4	Abw x 18	18
F	2	Captain x 1, Commander x 1	0	0	Abw x 2	2
G	0	n/a	14	C1/C2 x 12 Grade B1/B2 x 2	Abw x 14	14
H	5	Gp Captain x1 Wing Commander x 1 Sqdrn Leader x 3	5	C1/C2 x 3 Grade B1/B2 x 1 D/E x 1	Abw x 10	10

**Table 3-1 Table of Respondents by Grade, Location and Operating Centre**



Table 3-1. shows the breakdown of respondents by grade, location and Operating Centre.

**KEY:** ABW= Abbeywood, CO= Corsham, FO=Foxhill, Ens=Ensleigh, Gos=Gosport, Cop=Copenacre.

One Interview was carried out at Shrivenham Station due to logistical reasons, that interview is coded as Sh.

Seventy nine interviews were carried out at Abbeywood because Abbeywood was the headquarters of DE&S and had the largest staff population. Twenty six interviews were carried out at Corsham, Foxhill, Copenacre and Ensleigh prior to, and concurrent with, activity to collocate all staff from other locations to Abbeywood. These interviews and the resulting data aided the validation of the themes gained from within the Operating Centres that were the core research constituencies, thus enabling the researcher to identify whether those themes were in turn replicated more widely across DE&S.

Table 3–2 shows the grade and rank equivalents within DE&S. Within Chapters 4 and 5 Civil Service Grade is described as SCS (Senior Civil Service) or Civil Service broader band. Military grades are described as their rank.

Civil Service Pay Band	Army	Navy	Royal Airforce
Senior Civil Service (SCS) Pay band (PB)4	General	Admiral	Air Chief Marshal
SCS PB3	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral	Air Marshal
SCS PB2	Major General	Rear Admiral	Air Vice Marshal
SCS PB1	Brigadier	Commodore	Air Commodore
B1	Colonel	Captain	Group Captain
B2	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Wing Commander
C1	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Squadron Leader
C2	Captain	Lieutenant	Flight Lieutenant
D	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	Sub- Lieutenant	Flying Officer
E1 E2	Warrant Officer (WO) 1 WO2	WO1 WO2	WO1 Flight Sergeant

**Table 3-2 Grade and Rank Equivalence Table**

### **3.3.6 Application**

The use of the instruments of observations, semi-structured interviews, combined with the multi-factorial approach to the research enabled the collection of data and information that described how people felt, what they believed in, and why they acted in a particular way in a particular situation. The methods were applied in the style of a sandwich, observations were started in 2005, but interviews were only carried out in 2010 and 2011, while observations continued until 2014. These observations helped in the definition of firstly the questions for the pilot study, described in section 3.4 and then the re-definition and clarification of the questions that were used in the main study. This method allowed findings from the observations to be queried with informants, and the veracity of the observation to be challenged and tested.

### **3.3.7 Data Analysis**

This research used a grounded theory approach and the principles of grounded theory to analyse the data that was gathered by observations and questionnaires (Glaser, 1992). A grounded theory approach to data is, as Charmaz (2011 p 155) states, *'an emergent method which begins with the empirical world and builds an inductive understanding of it as events unfold and knowledge accrues'*. Therefore data and the discovery of themes within the data drives the application of those themes to theory.

In addition to those data types, the researcher was exposed to and was able to analyse DE&S policy documents and other texts that were appropriate to the research, such as dress codes (Bain, 2008, Cooke, 2008, Shaw, 2015f, MOD, 2004). These paper and intranet-based texts comprised the formal organisational rules that communicate Policy Rules and Guidance (PRG) of the socio-technical organisation. They perform the function of communicating instructions about how people should behave and how they should perform their role-based functions.

The analysis of those documents supported and informed the analysis gathered from the data and observations, all of which are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The researcher analysed data by firstly learning the data, and capturing themes by hand. Those themes were then transferred into NVivo™ as the tool of choice. NVivo is a widely used qualitative analysis tool. Further textual analysis was carried out by text mining the data that was stored in NVivo™. Text mining was achieved through, for example, identifying how often a particular theme, or word, or word set occurred, and also where that theme occurred within the data set. This technique was particularly useful to this research during the later stages of writing up the results, when it was used to check on themes that had previously been identified in order to gauge the weight of data supporting them. It was also used when a new theme arose from the data, in order to test the data to see how widespread that theme was within the data.

Data mining was used in this research with the output of a word-tree, which is a visual representation of the proximity of the search phrase to other linked phrases within the data.

Data-mining was considered to be faster and more flexible than coding and theme development, so it had greater utility during the writing up of this research, and became the method that was preferred for the analysis of the data. Therefore, within this research data-mining was a useful analytical technique within an overall approach that was based on grounded theory principles as it allowed emergent themes to be tested by reference to the data gathered.

### **3.3.8 Data Presentation**

From the analysis of the data a narrative structure emerged from the themes that were discovered in the data that enabled the data to be presented logically. The foundation of that narrative were data elements as quotations that were derived from questionnaire responses, observations and photographs. That foundation was formed into a trajectory of factors that appeared to affect the organisational

culture of DE&S. These factors were developed into three strands; Chapter 4 describes some of the groups that were discovered in DE&S and some of their attributes, while Chapter 5 describes induction and socialisation and cultural drag; Chapter 6 then discusses how those factors appeared to affect the organisational culture of DE&S and also what that culture could be characterised as. There then followed the period of drafting and re-writing where the data was sifted and tested. During this period the qualitative data were represented both textually as a narrative summary reporting the results of the research, and graphically as figures or photographs where appropriate, to illustrate a particular response.

## **3.4 Testing the Research Methods**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

Section 3.2 described a series of research methods that were available to this research, while section 3.3 described how they were deployed in this research. Section 3.4 describes how those methods were tested, and what measures were put in place during the research in order to improve the validity and reliability of the research. The research methods were formally tested in a pilot study.

### **3.4.2 A Pilot Study**

The pilot study was carried out in the Through Life Project Management group (TLPM), a 1\* organisation in DE&S. This was a support group in DE&S in 2008. In particular this study tested the research strategy of using a web-based questionnaire, appropriate qualitative data analysis and observations as appropriate methods of gathering data on the socialisation of people into teams, people's feelings of identity in teams and also intergroup behaviours within those teams.

### **3.4.3 Study Context**

In 2008 the study group consisted of 85 people, across two locations: Bristol Abbeywood and Kentigern House, Glasgow. The pilot study was carried out as part of an official off-site team-building event, which is where the observations were made.

This was the first time that a study of this nature had been proposed within this or any other group within DE&S and there was some reticence from the study group's management board members, who were worried that the research would be critical of their management style or of them personally.

That particular hurdle was overcome by showing the board members the questions and the methodology before they were deployed, thus giving them the ability to question the reasons for using a particular question and giving the researcher the opportunity to defend their use. Once the questions and methodology were reviewed by the board members they were approved, apart from some minor issues which revolved around Data Protection and the capture of possibly sensitive personal data. These questions were removed from the questionnaire.

#### **3.4.4 Practicalities of the Pilot Study**

A questionnaire was given to 60 team members in the week prior to the team building event: Forty responded, including one who commented on all of the questions with remarks such as *'I don't like this question'* and *'stupid question'*. Discussion of this, and also the initial analysis of the data gave the researcher a real sense that they had misjudged the reactions of some of the group members that were the research subjects. This use of an outlier of the responses was taken as a single example of explicit criticism of the study, and enabled the researcher to reflect on the practice and validity of the study, which in turn informed the researcher's practice.

While most people were positive in responding to the questionnaire, the fact that one person gave negative comments to the questions enabled a re-assessment of how the researcher would attract informants in future. This change was, that in future, research subjects would be made more aware of what the research entailed.

The research questions asked during this pilot study were:

*What teams or groups do you belong to in Operating Centre A<sup>27</sup>, how do you identify with those groups; how strong is your identification with them and how do you view the other teams in terms of sharing knowledge?*

In a general sense, these questions asked and the observations carried out during the study considered the group member's feelings of identity in teams and inter-group behaviours within those teams. The reason for this was very clear. At that period during the research, the researcher still considered the research to be based around the exploration of identity and its manifestations in DE&S. It was only after the pilot study that there was a realisation that there were other factors that were not as visible as 'identity' in a mixed military and civilian organisation that affected the research. The questions were chosen for two reasons: first, because they summed up the researcher's early thoughts of the nature of the research and secondly, to connect directly with the research question itself. At that stage of the research, the researcher was of the view that 'it was all about physically belonging to a group' and that the important groups for people were the physical, visible groups and their manifestations of identity.

The experience of carrying out the pilot study and the inadequacy of the questions at that time demonstrated that the researcher had not spent sufficient time developing the questions and the questionnaire prior to carrying out the pilot study, a common failing that was pointed out by Foddy (1994).

With hindsight the questions and application of the pilot methodology show the researcher's naiveté and his low level of understanding at that time of identity theory, such as defined by Billig et al. (1973), Tajfel (1979), (1986).

The study was carried out using two ethnographic techniques. This was to test the researcher's ability to use these techniques in the field. The techniques used were a questionnaire and observations. An internet based questionnaire was

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<sup>27</sup> Name changed to ensure anonymity.



deployed, using Survey Monkey.com <sup>(TM)</sup> as the technology mechanism. The questionnaire was delivered, via an email link, two weeks before the team building event was held. This enabled a management team and the researcher to do some initial analysis of the results prior to the researcher carrying out observations at the event. These included in-depth observations, and field notes gathered during the course of the event and also post-hoc observations.

The pilot study consisted of four parts: the on-line questionnaire,<sup>28</sup> which was three days before the event, and three participant observation sessions, day 1, evening 1 and day 2. The reason for this sequence was that the main team building event was held at a hotel, taking place over two days. Most of the staff attending stayed at the hotel, and the days were broken down into talking sessions and workshops and exercises designed to bring people together and foster a sense of being in one team. The event started at midday November 11<sup>th</sup> and finished at midday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The researcher was able to capture observations as they happened. This was the first time during the research that the researcher became aware of the potential pitfalls, or benefits of taking this approach. Those pitfalls became apparent during the early evening when the researcher was approached by the researcher's Team Leader, a B1 grade, and criticised for not joining in groups enough.

It was also said very forcefully that '*people don't like being watched*' (Shaw, 2008e). At the time the researcher was finishing writing up the researcher's notes from earlier in the day. The researcher was unable to find anywhere out of the way to do this, so was in corner of the bar area. At the Team Leader's insistence, the researcher put their notes down and had to rely on memory for the rest of the evening; thus, providing another learning point which was that memory plays a part in research but that memory must be supported by field notes so that the

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<sup>28</sup> Using Survey Monkey.com, with output as Excel <sup>TM</sup> files.

memory remains valid. The last observations were at 1.49 am as the researcher was leaving the bar.

### **3.4.5 Reflection on the Pilot Study**

A pilot study is an important element of the research and should be treated as a research project in its own right. This did not occur with this pilot study as it was biased towards gathering data to improve the functioning of Operating Centre A and away from a purely academic study. While this did not invalidate either the data or the data gathering methods, or even belittle the results, it made the interpretation and subsequent write up more difficult because the researcher was trying to answer the wrong question with the data.

The qualitative data gathering during the pilot study was relatively successful, the quantitative element less so. The questionnaire that supported the data gathering was designed over the period of three weeks. The availability of the questionnaire was communicated to users via email and also through '*Face to Face*' briefings<sup>29</sup>. This took place in the week preceding the Team Building event and the response rate was 46%.

The quantitative data gathered were exported to an Excel <sup>TM</sup> spread sheet to facilitate its analysis. Analysis was to take place thematically, with the outcomes being expressed as factors of the number of people who respond positively or negatively to a particular question.

It was at this point that the researcher realised that they had made a series of mistakes that would make full analysis of the data very difficult. These mistakes were in turn: carrying out the pilot study too early in the research process; not being sufficiently confident with, or competent in quantitative data gathering techniques; and not being sufficiently competent in question and questionnaire

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<sup>29</sup> Face to Face briefings are a corporately legitimised communications mechanism which as it suggests consists of Team leaders briefing teams through a cascade process down the hierarchy by talking to people 'face to face'.

development. The result of making these mistakes was the use of a questionnaire that was overly long and complex. This meant that the data gathered were broad and shallow rather than focussed and deep, and thus more indicative.

There was another factor that played into this series of errors; the questionnaire itself was not tested before being deployed in the Pilot Study. This resulted in some of the questions being seen by respondents as being naïve, thus reducing the credibility of the research and the researcher in the eyes of the research group. The other effect of this lack of competence was that the data gathered were not in a state to manipulate easily. This was because all of the data had to be re coded and re-categorised in order to make clear the differing categories that were identified.

Once the data were coded it was then imported into Minitab™ to produce a statistically analysed report.

On analysis of the data, one pattern emerged that appeared to be significant; that pattern was of the strength of identity within teams and organisations. The pattern that emerged was not expected by the researcher.

Because of the pan-MOD and pan-DE&S role of the Operating Centre, the researcher had expected the majority of the respondents in the pilot study to identify most strongly with MOD and DE&S.

This was not the case. The data produced a pattern that indicated a split in identification, with respondents below the level of B2 grade identifying most strongly with their role teams, and above the level of B2 grade identifying most strongly with MOD and DE&S.

This pattern of the strength of identity that was identified in the pilot study, and the factors that produced it was refined and taken into the main study and the responses were measured on a Likert scale to provide greater clarity on just how strongly a person identifies with each of the groups.

A further pattern in the data indicated that people were able to belong to, perform in, perform alongside and also identify with multiple groups at once, thus time-sharing their performativity and belonging in a one-to-many relationship, thus opening up a literature field developed by such as Pate et al. (2010), Amiot et al. (2007), Ben-Ner et al. (2009), El Akremi et al. (2009), Ellemers (2005), Pratt and Foreman (2000), Kirke (2007d).

The researcher identified three key learning points as a direct result of the pilot study.

These were:

- The craft of field work. This required a rapid re-evaluation and re-appraisal of the researcher's fieldwork technique, because of the negative reaction of some informants to the research. This resulted in the researcher being much more discrete when capturing observations.
- Group sizes and conversational groups. This was a key phenomenon observed, although at the time it was not realised just how important this was. This phenomenon was the formation and disintegration of conversation groups during the informal event. The groups formed of five to six people but disintegrated to three people, and then reformed to five to six people. This factor of group size and accompanying behaviour led to the investigation of the literature surrounding the factors that affect group sizes. This in turn led to the researcher's identifying the concept of the evolutionary group sizes as proposed by Dunbar (1993a) which appeared to explain the sizes of the conversational groups observed that evening, and proved to be a valuable break-through in the investigative axis of the research.
- The third factor was the identification of a hierarchical split in the strength of identity towards role groups, *the front line*, MOD and DE&S.

This led to the development of a smaller, more focused questioning strategy that produced fewer, but more high quality, data points.

### **3.4.6 Implications of the Pilot Study**

The pilot study informed the research in several ways. The first way was in the use of a research methodology that was appropriate for the research. The pilot study had used a large questionnaire with supporting observations as the data gathering technique. At the end of the pilot study the researcher realised several things, first that the questionnaire was too long and that informants would not complete it unless they were particularly motivated. Secondly that the questions were asking about what happened to a person, rather than how they felt about a particular phenomenon, and thus were not as illustrative as they could have been. The third realisation was that the amount of work needed to analyse the questions was negatively dis-proportionate to the value of the answers that were received. These factors led to the wholesale changing of the research methodology.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability.**

Bracht and Glass (1968) and also Huberman and Miles (2002) recognized that absolute validity cannot be guaranteed in studies of this type. However they do accept that a properly constructed interview population reinforced by longitudinal observations can increase the validity and reliability of both the conclusion and the data from which those conclusions were derived.

Therefore, in order to achieve the highest levels of validity within this research, the multi-method and multi-theoretical approach espoused by such as Gioia (1990) was employed. Validity and reliability were achieved through the use of multiple main data points in the research. Those data points consisted of the multiple observations that were achieved during the course of the research. Observational data points were achieved formally between 2008 and 2014 on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Informal data points were also gathered from the researcher's work note book from July 2005 until the formal start of the research in 2008. It was through the multiplicity of different types of data points and the triangulation of responses across these data points that the research achieved a high level of internal validity and reliability. The data gained from these individual data points enabled themes to be derived that were complementary across and between data types and methods.

The interview sample size of 124 was influenced by two factors, the first being the time available of the researcher and the second, the fact that interviews took place over a five week period during which the researcher took annual leave to carry out the interviews. That sample benefits the research in two ways, firstly the breadth of the interview sample. Interviews were carried out in 10 Operating Centres, concentrating on three completely different types (Operating Centres A, C and D), and the second was interviews were carried out across a wide spread of civilian and military personnel across all grades who worked in DE&S Abbeywood.

To further improve the validity reliability and credibility of the research the interviews were combined with six years of formal observation and a further two years of recollections of the researcher's experiences within the DPA.

This increased the reliability of the data through partial triangulation of the combination of the two techniques. This then provides one element of the methodological foundation of the research because interview responses can be used to challenge, validate or explore observed phenomena and analysis of observed phenomena can provide material that can be used to explore and expand interview responses.

Validity was achieved by carrying out a minimum of 7 interviews within each of the target Operating Centres, with a target figure of 10 semi-randomly selected interviews across grades from Administrative Assistant (AA) grade civil servants to SCS 2\* Major General/Rear Admiral/Air Vice Marshal in the military and equivalent rank Senior Civil Service.

Validity was also supported by interviews with randomly selected people who were not in the target Operating Centres,<sup>30</sup> but who were in the wider DE&S. This enabled the themes uncovered in the target Operating Centres to be traced back into the wider organisation as appropriate.

The data were then further validated by reference back to selected informants in DE&S. If informants recognized the themes that were presented to them, the researcher took this to be a form of face validation of the accuracy of the data, analysis, and conclusions.

Thus the data met Sanger's criteria whereby *"analyses of the relationship between events and people achieve greater validity if participants who have been*

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<sup>30</sup> Operating Centre D was treated differently as on moving there to work after carrying the main interviews the researcher was asked to carry out a subsidiary set of interviews and more detailed observations.

*observed in the research, recognize themselves, their motives, their actions and their rationale in the researcher's recordings and reconstructions".* (1996 p 40).

The combination of multiple theories, methods and techniques as described by Jick (1979) also enabled triangulation, which further strengthened the validity and reliability of the results. The research employed three types of triangulation: data triangulation, theory triangulation, and method triangulation. Data triangulation was achieved through the combined use of interviews, observations, and questionnaires. The use of these various instruments produced both qualitative and quantitative data, which produced a degree of data triangulation. Theory triangulation was achieved through the use of different theoretical viewpoints for determining competing hypotheses. Methodological triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple methods to study a single phenomenon as described by Niglas (2000 p 2).

Triangulation was important to this research because of the complexity of DE&S. It was because of that complexity that the use of a single method or theory was therefore thought to be insufficient to unpick that complexity, leaving the danger that the research would have missed key factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S. The value of a multi-method approach enabled the researcher to both develop and improve the initial conceptual model of how people, working within DE&S, viewed DE&S and also '*lead to superior findings*' Bryman (2012 p 605). The approach that this research took to triangulation aided the establishment of validity through methodological and data triangulation on the underlying reasons and *truths* of group behaviours and the constructs that affect the groups being studied, as indicated by Foddy (1994), Jick (1979 p 602), and Olsen (2004).

Validity was affected by the demographic spread of respondents. Within this research, the responding group was predominantly male. This was because DE&S was a predominantly male organisation. This was reflected within the random selection of respondents. No comparison was made within the results



on the effects of group behaviour on a gendered basis. If this were to be carried out subsequently then a larger data sample would probably be required in order to provide a solid statistical basis for those findings between the two variables of male and female gender. No respondents identified themselves as Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay or Transgender (LBGT) within the research.

### **3.5.1 The Effect of 'Insiderness'**

Alvesson (2010), Kamsteeg (2008), Collins (2002), and Kirke (2013) discuss insider research within organisations in great depth and they identify problems such as the acceptance by the organisation of the legitimacy of the researcher to carry out their research and also the problems of remaining objectively distant from the subjects. The methods that were employed to maintain objectivity during the research are discussed in Section 3.5.1.

The researcher as previously stated was a fully integrated member of DE&S, so they could only complete this research as an insider carrying out what Alvesson (2010 pp 156-174) describes as at-home ethnography. The dangers of becoming too close to the subject are discussed by Ybema (2009), who warns that distance becomes as important as closeness to the subject especially in gaining an understanding of the '*natives*' Ybema (2009 p 101).

In respect of distance, the researcher had no choice as to which type of ethnography was to be carried out, as they were an established civil servant when the research was initiated. Because of this, the research took place within a pragmatic, pre-defined framework, where the researcher had already established friendship networks, functional and work-based alliances, and was known to many within DE&S.

There were risks associated with these pre-defined attributes, such as the researcher having prior knowledge of conversations, and of what might be termed *good* informants, who are able to articulate a full response to a question, rather than just provide a yes or no answer as described by for example, Seidler (1974),

Van Maanen (1979), Barriball and While (1994), Chambers (1983), and also Booth and Booth (1996). These informants may have made the results to be subject to a degree of confirmation bias if they had been used within the research,

These issues were recognized at the beginning of the research, and were countered by the researcher expanding the detailed research domain, and purposefully researching Operating Centres that were different from the ones that the researcher had worked in or had a close functional relationship with. This in turn enhanced the stranger value of the research as described by for example, Cressey (1983), Rogers (1999) and also Guest et al. (2006) and thus improved the validity of the results.

The investigation of Operating Centres in this way provided a separate series of challenges, because during the research period the researcher worked within three different Operating Centres<sup>31</sup> and was therefore a full insider in those Operating Centres. As an effect of moving from one job-role to another job-role the researcher underwent a transition from being a full insider and group member in three of the research domains, to eventually becoming, in turn, a partial and complete outsider in relation to those same domains.

The movement across these groups provided complementary viewpoints for the research and also enabled more detailed data to be gathered that supported the research. There was a corollary to that level of insiderness in that the researcher was an outsider to the other Operating Centres in DE&S.

This meant that in addition to the negotiation of an emotional identity the researcher needed to negotiate and demonstrate a research identity as described by Down et al. (2006) that was known, credible and trusted where he was an insider to an Operating Centre or team, but that credibility needed to be developed in the groups where he was an outsider in his research identity. This development of partial insiderness and research credibility was achieved through

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<sup>31</sup> Operating Centres A, B and D.

the use of a work identity that the researcher was able to use as a bridge into the teams, because in that linked identity he had worked with some teams to provide 'services' to them, he was therefore known to them in that other identity.

It was in this embedded insider role that the first of the reflections on the effects and implications of insiderness were discovered. The researcher was participating fully in each group's activities and meetings, with all of the tensions and personal and emotional engagement which that entailed. Nevertheless, the researcher, in their academic identity, was able to step across a boundary and engage at times in critical reflection within that particular group context. But being a member of these groups and working within them also meant that at times there was the danger of the researcher disengaging from the research observations, either because they were tired, or because they were engaged in 'working', rather than 'researching'.

The phenomena of engagement, disengagement and *going native* have been discussed by Alvesson who suggests that the researcher is not an ethnographer in the sense of being a professional stranger, but is an '*observing participant*' (2010 p 159 ). The researcher, therefore, needed to be aware at all times of the particular identity that they were in.

This challenge was countered by, for example, the researcher writing in their field notes that they had stopped observing, or that it was becoming difficult to concentrate on the observations, or that they had missed part of the work conversation because they were observing and not participating.

The challenges that the researcher faced, including the difficulties of remaining objective and of maintaining an academic approach, during his work, have been described by for example, Alvesson (2010), Kamsteeg (2008p 101), Moeran (2009p 140), Collins (2002), and also Kirke (2013). Being an insider meant that there was an element of auto-ethnography in the ethnography and data gathering (Coffey, 2000p 1), as the researcher/civil servant was an active member of the groups that he was studying. As a consequence of this, the researcher had to

deliberately concentrate on staying on the boundary, between a participant observing group behaviour, and being an observant participant, fully immersed in the group, who was fully fledged in the group's rules and who was observing the group.

The legitimisation and maintenance of the researcher's professional networks while carrying out the research provided a separate set of issues. These included the researcher being seen, and viewed by group members as an outsider, simply through the act of carrying out research and observing the groups within that organisation.

A great deal of care was taken therefore, within particular groups to minimise the visibility of the research, and thus the tension between the researcher, the researched, and management. There was a further effect of insiderness that became more apparent when completing the writing up of the research. It became apparent that in linking the literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2 to the field of DE&S the researcher was informing the literature with examples of data and not taking a more hypothetical approach to the application of data to the field.

This was, for the researcher, a difficult thing to change, because of the depth to which the researcher was embedded physically, psychologically and emotionally in the organisation of DE&S and its organisational culture. This example of insiderness affecting the research was countered by the creation of a series of implications statements that are set out in the literature review. A series of questions were posed that allowed the application of the literature to DE&S which enabled the researcher's experiences as a civil servant embedded in DE&S to occur without 'giving the game away' by using data and experience as examples to illustrate the link of the applicability of the literature to the field.

### **3.5.2 Reactivity and Reflexivity**

The phenomenon of reactivity refers to when individuals change their behaviour because they know they were being observed, see for example and also Heppner (2008), Higate and Cameron (2006), Johnson (2003). Reactivity can be triggered when individuals alter their behaviour to conform to the expectations of the observer, such as giving confirmatory answers when leading questions are asked by an inexperienced interviewer. The change that is engendered may be positive or negative, and is likely to be situationally dependent. Reactivity can also be a significant threat to a research study's internal validity.

The researcher minimised the threat from this phenomenon by the appropriate use of open and non-leading questions and also by avoiding responding to requests for advice and recommendations on group behaviour within the context of this thesis. But as this thesis was an at-home ethnographic study of the researcher's culture, groups and behaviours, it was inevitable that a degree of reactivity occurred. Several respondents contacted the researcher post-interview to discuss their own reflections on the work. This included occasions where respondents had noticed different group's behaviours and had themselves become aware of changing their own behaviour in particular group situations.

This level of reactivity and reflexivity enabled the researcher to add these external reflections on the research as notes to the original data, which in turn informed and strengthened the resulting conclusions.

### 3.5.3 The Researcher's Identity<sup>32</sup>

The research was carried out in parallel, and intertwined with, the researcher's formal duties. This level of embeddedness was both positive, in that it enabled a direct link between function and research to be made, and also negative in that the boundary between researcher and worker was at times very easy to blur. As a consequence, the researcher either became engrossed in the research, thus not carrying out their functional duties, or they became engrossed in their functional duties and therefore missed, or did not realise the importance of observations or interactions that were happening around them. It was because of these issues that the researcher had to remain consciously competent of which task they were carrying out and also of their reflective needs.

During the course of this work, the researcher became aware that through their burgeoning academic identity, the researcher, as both a researcher and worker, had become much more of an outsider to the organisation that the researcher was working in, belonged to and was studying. This was a transition point and this *becoming* of their academic identity came about at the expense of a weakening role identity as an employee, both in relation to their Role Team and to DE&S.

The researcher realised that he was much more comfortable in his academic identity due to the dissonance between their role identity and his academic identity. It was at this point that they became aware that research carries an emotional loading and that to be a committed researcher one must engage with one's research on many levels and that an emotional identity was salient (Coffey, 2000 p 158). Each time the researcher moved from one group to another, their identity salience changed, because not only does a personal identity balance change but identities have salience, transience, and value during a research

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<sup>32</sup> This section has been presented in an expanded form as an academic paper and is also the subject of a book chapter in preparations at October 2015. The book is provisionally titled "Encountering Ethnographies", Palgrave Macmillan.

project (Coffey, 2000). Each of these attributes can become salient at any time during the research. The performance of research as an insider *at home* can therefore cause emotional dissonance, as described by Down et al. (2006 p 6), between the researcher's different identities.

Closeness and familiarity with both the researched and the research domain also provided their own challenges to the researcher within their application of insider ethnography. When one becomes familiar with the group, it can be very difficult to see the mundane, because one is immersed in it, thus reducing the stranger value (Guest et al., 2006, Cressey, 1983).

The researcher needed to be constantly aware of the mundane, and constantly and consistently question what was happening, why it was happening, who was carrying it out, where it was happening and would this phenomenon happen anywhere else. In order to remain separate from the research the researcher did not take on a second persona as in the style of Collins (2002). Rather, because he, in his identity as civil servant, already possessed multiple other functional nested identities as a librarian, manager, and information manager. He simply entered one new identity to an existing suite of identities. In doing so, he created and maintained a cognitive and intellectual boundary between the research and their functional work.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 has described the research methodology and the methods that were used to investigate group behaviours as lived at DE&S. The philosophy and the research methods have described a multi-stranded, social sciences based research framework. The research strategy and methods supported this approach by using a broader social sciences, ethnographic approach in conjunction with quantitative methods where appropriate. This was achieved while working within the 'field' of DE&S. The research was carried out using an interpretivist and constructivist ontology, using observations combined with qualitative and quantitative data to explain organisational culture of DE&S through a narrative epistemology. An essentially qualitative approach was because the researcher believed that people did not describe their world in terms of hard data but as stories. This was why, in order to reflect and respect that reality, the research employed a predominantly narrative approach to gather and analyse the data and to present the results and conclusions.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 now report the output and outcomes of the methods that were described in Chapter 3. They achieve that by presenting data that illustrate factors affecting the organisational culture of DE&S during the research period.





## **4. Attributes of Groups**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Chapters 1 through to 3 have framed the research domain and critically reviewed and synthesised the theoretical and methodological frameworks that underpinned this research. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 report the findings as a series of case studies that answer the research question: *What factors affect the organisational culture in DE&S?* The data were gathered in detail in three Operating Centres, and also more generally across the remaining 18 Operating Centres.

#### **4.1.1 Navigation**

Section 4 introduces the chapter. Section 4.2 reprises the group context within DE&S that was set out in Chapter 1. Section 4.3 reports the manifestations of identity that were observed in DE&S in the form of personal, social and group identity and also geographical identity. Section 4.5 presents findings on the strength of identity that was expressed by members of DE&S in regard to various groups. Section 4.6 presents the formal and informal group sizes that were found in DE&S from two perspectives, that of the group member and also of DE&S. Section 4.7 describes the linguistic frameworks that existed within the groups in DE&S.

## 4.2 Group Context

*'I suppose in a rawer concept, village life under a smaller population, such as the manorial system of medieval times, meant that everyone knew everyone else and there was a structure for skills (i.e. butcher, baker and candle-stick maker—literally). Everyone fitted into their niche within that society and provided a service for the other person. In the MOD, our skills rarely reflect in our day to day work. We are expected to be Jacks of all Trades yet really masters of none. And who can really grow excited about new innovations, such as MOSS<sup>33</sup>? Therefore, because we don't have solid trades, we are seen where: 'they protect their own resources, don't share resources', as people who were trying to grasp at vapour to solidify it into something tangible' (Shaw, 2010o).*

As with any organisation, DE&S comprised formal functional groups and informal social groups. DE&S was led at the highest level by the DE&S Top Team, consisting of seven people (Shaw, 2014m). The Top-Team consisted of Chiefs of Materiel and Directors General. The Chief of Materiel areas were led by a Senior Civil Service pay band 3, or a 3\* Military Officer, labelled either a Chief of Materiel (COM) Land, Air or Maritime, or a civilian director, Joint Enablers. Each Chief of Materiel (COM) had his or her own top team of five members, and each COM was organised into Operating Centres, which were led by a Senior Civil Service pay band 2, or 2\* rank military equivalent. These areas were defined by the function that they performed, for example, one of the COM Land Operating Centres was the Weapons Operating Centre, which although in Chief of Materiel Lands domain, provided munitions and explosive support for all Front Line Commands.

Figure 4-1 reminds the reader of the simplified organisation of DE&S. It shows the structure of DE&S at that time with the relevant Chiefs of Material and

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<sup>33</sup> Microsoft Office SharePoint. An information management system used in DE&S.

Operating Centres, with the crosscutting functions of, for example finance shown as horizontal dashed lines.

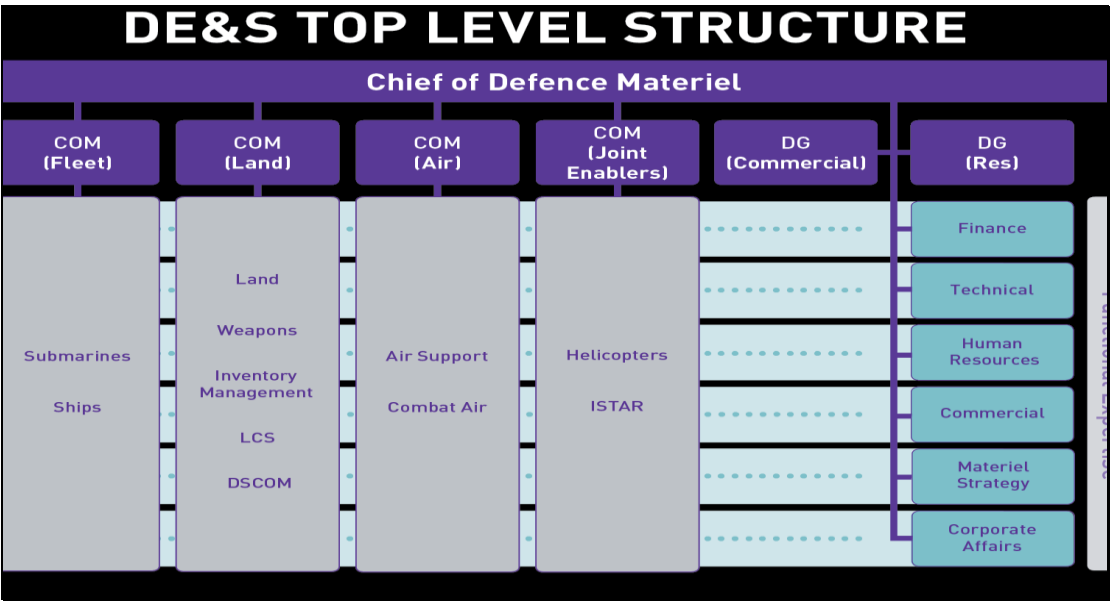


Figure 4-1 Simplified DE&S Top Level Structure

Source: DE&S Corporate Overview Presentation

Operating Centres, shown as blocks under each COM on Figure 4-1 had formally issued mission statements that provided the framework that legitimised the functional cultures that existed within their component groups. The Weapons Operating Centre mission was:

*‘To deliver and support cross domain, end to end weapons system solutions, grounded in UK Supply Chain but with access to global markets’*  
(Operating Centre D, 2012).

Operating Centres were further broken down into areas that possessed their own functional and cultural identity through their functional role and also their links to the military domain that they solely, or predominantly supported. The organisational nomenclature of each area was unique to that Operating Centre. In Operating Centre D, for example, these were called Pillars, (Operating Centre D, 2012) in Operating Centre A, these same areas were called Business

Units,(Operating Centre A, 2012) and in Operating Centre E, they were called Capability or Equipment Domains (Operating Centre E, 2011). . This research has named Operating Centres alphabetically to avoid using their real names. Pillars or Business Units were generally led by a SCS 1\* or military equivalent and were broken down further into Delivery Teams and Project Teams led by a B1 grade civil servant or military equivalent. Below this level existed Functional Teams, which were led by a B2 grade civil servant, or military equivalent rank. Below this existed Role Teams, that were led by C1 grade civil servants or their equivalent military rank. One way that Role Teams and Project Teams differentiated themselves was through a mission statement, or the shortened use of the equipment name or function that the group was responsible for. This was visible in, for example, the labels that teams used to mark their position on floorplates.

In addition to a mission statement, a more detailed level of functional legitimacy was assigned to these groups as a result of the tasks that they were required to perform.

## **4.3 Attributes, Characteristics and Group Distinctiveness: Identity**

### **4.3.1 Introduction**

One of the most visible attributes of groups and group members in DE&S was their collective and individual identities and identifiers.

This thesis discusses identity in terms of personal, group, cultural and geographical identities, and the various manifestations of the salient identities that existed in DE&S during the research period. Section 4.3 presents examples of a sub-set of those identities. A caveat must be observed here: the identities observed were by no means all of the identities that were present in DE&S. As with all of the data presented, the identities presented are necessarily a snapshot of the phenomena that were temporally and contextually bound. It will be demonstrated that these identity manifestations in DE&S were legitimised elements of group distinctiveness and were therefore elements of the symbolic and pragmatic cultural framework of DE&S.

At the beginning of the research the researcher believed that the various manifestations of social and group identity within DE&S were solely responsible for the creation of exclusive boundaries around those groups, and that these boundaries were responsible for the negative attitudes between groups that the researcher had observed.

The researcher therefore felt that identity and its representations were important to the group members, the groups that they were performed within, and also to DE&S as an organisation, and thus an important avenue for investigation. Whilst true, Chapters 4 and 5 will show that although this was the researcher's position at the start of the research, as the data emerged and concepts were detected, what was observed was much more complex and nuanced than was first thought.

These identities and their manifestations, rather than being a sole causative factor, were actually contributory factors in the system that affected group behaviour in DE&S. The examples of identities in DE&S were observed to be nested and complementary. This is as described by Pate et al. (2010), or through the multiple axes of identity as described by Kirke (2007d). In addition, depending on which group context the group member was performing in at the time, these identities did not need to be exclusive, as described by Ellemers (2005) but could be complementary, as described by Kirke (2007d).

#### **4.3.2 A Trajectory of Identity Development in DE&S**

**Finding: There was a trajectory to the manifestation of identities in DE&S that started prior to the creation of DE&S on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007, when the DPA and the DLO merged (MOD, 2006).**

The creation of DE&S was, for this thesis, the most recent point where personal, organisational, and group identities merged and changed.<sup>34</sup> This merger was not a direct transition from two organisations into one DE&S. There was a period of transition that started in 2004/2005.<sup>35</sup>

The transition involved the creation of a team to manage the merger and integration of the DPA and the DLO: the DPA/DLO Merger and Integration Team (DDMIT) (Shaw, 2006a).

One aspect of the merger was the collocation of the DLO and DPA management teams in Abbeywood (Shaw, 2006b). Prior to the merger, the DLO had been headquartered in Bath, with the DPA being headquartered in Bristol.

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<sup>34</sup> At the time of writing, in April 2014, DE&S has undergone a further identity change to a Bespoke Trading Entity.

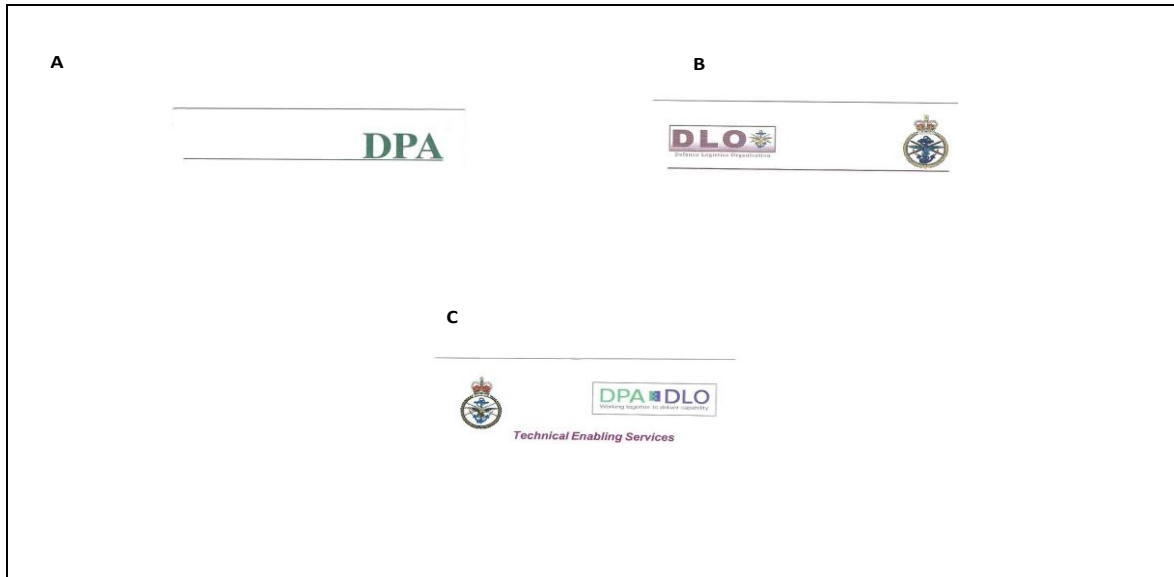
<sup>35</sup> The recommendation to combine the two organisations was put forward by MOD senior official Tom McKane, who was commissioned to review acquisition arrangements. His report, *Enabling Acquisition Change*, followed the publication of the Defence Industrial Strategy in December 2005 which outlined what defence technologies the government intended to buy in the next 10 years, and in the longer term.

The collocation of what the MOD, and also Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993), call the 'Top-Teams', sent out several signals that appeared to be interpreted differently by the staff within the DPA and the DLO. The message was interpreted by the DLO as though the DPA were taking over the DLO because the DLO Top-Team was moving, and not the DPA team; secondly, it signalled that the DLO location in Bath was not important, because if it was, then the DLO Top-Team would have remained there (Shaw, 2007-2010a).

Neither of these were actually *true* in an organisational sense, even though they were perceived to be so by group members, because both groups thought they were being taken over by the other group. (Shaw, 2007-2010b) This dissonance occurred during, and after the merger, and was still in the vernacular of DE&S until 2014. These factors had some effect on the way that DE&S staff viewed themselves during and after the merger, and also whether they willingly accepted the merger in terms of changed identities.

A further factor in the transition of identity from the DPA and the DLO was the development of a transitional organisation called Technical Enabling Services (TES) (Shaw, 2006c) This organisation was specifically created from within the DPA, to signal that organisational behaviour was to change from the DPA single organisational ethos, to one in which services were provided to both the DPA and the DLO prior to the creation of DE&S. TES did not deliver equipment, it delivered services such as consultancy, and advice (Shaw, 2006d). In terms of the transition of identity, TES had a specific symbol on its business card to denote the *jointness* of that organisation (Shaw, 2006e) which appeared to be a deliberate move in preparation for DE&S, and to prepare people for the organisational change into one, rather than two organisations.





**Figure 4-2 Transition of Identity From the DPA: DLO: TES Business Cards**

Source: Derek Shaw

Figure 4-2 shows A – DPA business card logo that existed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007, B – DLO business card logo that existed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007 and C shows the TES business card logo that combined the DPA and the DLO logo and which existed from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2006 until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2007, when a formal DE&S logo was introduced.

TES only existed for a year, as part of the DLO and DPA Merger and Integration Team structure (DDMIT),(2007b) because it was an interstitial organisation that was created only to symbolically represent the fact that the DPA and DLO organisational processes and their socio-technical culture would have to change when the two organisations merged. TES business cards were replaced by either none, or by a DE&S branded card.

TES was seen by DDMIT as an opportunity to signal that change, and also to make some socio-technical and socio-cultural changes in advance of the actual merger and vesting day, which occurred on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2007.<sup>36</sup> But on vesting

<sup>36</sup> The first day of the formal existence of DE&S.

day, the only change that was apparent to staff was a new flag, new letterheads, and the DE&S lanyards. Their jobs did not change, unless of course they had been in the merger team. Therefore, the merger became viewed by many staff as *yet another change programme where nothing actually changes*, (Shaw, 2007-2010c) and staff appeared to become cynical about the merger.

Some of this cynicism may have come about because of the corporate nature of the change of identity.

#### **4.3.3 DE&S Corporate Branding**

**Finding: At the merger a new corporate identity was conceived that resulted in tension between the old identities of the DPA and the DLO when they were removed.**

When DE&S was created it was intended to be ‘*One DE&S*’ in terms of organisation structure, ideology and identity:

*‘ the brief was to come up with a new identity [for DE&S] which would come up with like a sort of top level identity and then a sort of sub-identity which would allow for all the Operating Centres and Project Teams to follow one stable identity, but have an opportunity to still be recognized as their Project Team name or Operating Centre name.... we were one organisation, we need to reflect this internally as a sense of belonging, [that] everything comes from the same stable...’* (Shaw, 2011t).

DE&S identity and branding was formally promulgated through Policy, Rules and Guidance (PRG). These mandated that all of the previous symbols and identities were to be replaced by a new corporate DE&S branding (DE&S, 2012). Some of these identities are shown in Photograph 4-1 to Photograph 4-8 . Within that one identity a series of groups were allowed to exist with their own identities that reinforced their historical identities within DE&S, rather than those identities being removed. Context to the construction of the DE&S identity was provided by the

C1 grade civil servant who was responsible for developing the symbols of DE&S identity on its inception. These symbols therefore initiated the outward perceptions and manifestations of the DE&S identity.

The creation of a new identity involved the removal of all old symbols, such as lanyards:

*‘...my new head of Second Comms [communications] feels that everyone should wear these [DE&S Lanyards]. We shouldn’t have any variation. His biggest hang up was you get people, who might wear their own football lanyard or their favourite beer or something! I know a lot of people wear Help The Heroes and that’s a good cause. So we can’t go around policing people telling them not to wear it, but I think what we can do is make sure that senior people set a good example that others can then follow..’ (Shaw, 2011t).*

The removal of the old DPA and DLO branding was specifically designed to enable DE&S to control physically and psychologically the way in which DE&S was represented internally to staff and also externally to other organisations. There therefore appeared to be a formal effort to impose a single identity on DE&S and its staff, but there was also a recognition that staff may not all wear the DE&S lanyard, for example, but would wear their own one as an act of variation, such variation from the ‘One DE&S’ identity was deemed by DE&S management to be a negative attribute.

There appeared to be a recognition that this would happen anyway. The following example also indicates the complexity of the task to reduce the old identities at that time in order to become ‘One DE&S’. This points to the recognition that people and Project Teams exerted a degree of resistance to the new identity by trying to retain their ‘old’ identities. As the civil servant responsible for the creation and implementation of the DE&S identity said:

*‘...As you can imagine there were over 200 disparate identities across the two organisations and a lot of those logos were executed in-house and were very sort of unprofessional, and whilst many people bought into the benefit of rationalising those and having a single umbrella identity with sub-identity underneath, there were a few teams who were resistant to change because they said that their identity was well established in the markets recognized within the Defence industry...look, we were one organisation we need to reflect this internally as a sense of belonging, everything comes from the same stable, .the only hesitance/resistance we [the corporate identity team] had was probably within Project Teams, at that level. And they were the people who were keen to hold onto their team identity...’*  
(Shaw, 2011t).

DE&S therefore appeared to reluctantly allow social categorisation and the facilitation of multiple identities at the Operating Centre and Project Team level because it created a single DE&S identity with sub-identities underneath and accepted that certain groups and individuals needed to identify themselves differently.

This therefore allowed multiple smaller groups to create and maintain their own para-corporate identities, even though all other formal former organisation logos were forcibly removed and replaced with new DE&S logos. This incomplete removal of, and in fact acceptance of, sub-identities at the team and Operating Centre level appeared to be one of the factors that allowed multiple organisational cultures to survive and thrive in DE&S.

One example of the removal of old corporate branding is shown in Photograph 4-1.

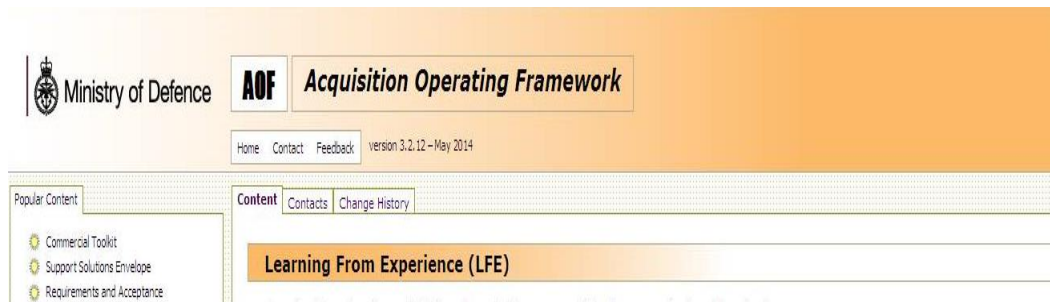


**Photograph 4-1 LFE Mints Box Logo**

**Source Derek Shaw**

In this example, the Learning from Experience (LFE) brand was established within primarily the DPA (Jordan et al., 1988). It was also known within the DLO as a result of activity through Technical Enabling Services (TES). The LFE logo was developed in the DPA, but was known and recognized in both the DPA and the DLO. The logo that is shown in was replaced by a corporate logo that was part of the DE&S branding and identity (DE&S, 2012).

The LFE logo that is shown in photograph 4-1 was replaced by a corporate logo that subsumed the LFE brand, along with many others under the overarching Acquisition Operating Framework (AOF), see Photograph 4-2. The AOF contain the DE&S processes that governed the acquisition and support of equipment within the MOD.



## Photograph 4-2 DE&S Logo That Replaced the LFE Logo

Source: Defence Intranet, Copyright MOD

This new logo was hidden within a new larger corporate DE&S identity that was opaque for many people within DE&S, possibly because of the lack of communication about the organisational changes that had occurred (Shaw, 2007a). This opacity resulted in people who wanted to access the service, being unable to find it through formal channels. They therefore had to find other ways to directly contact the LFE team members, either personally, or through back-channels to access the LFE service. This change to a seemingly unimportant element of a group's functional identity showed how organisational functionality and effectiveness could be undermined by not understanding how identities interacted with each other.

The introduction of the AOF appeared to create division, as some teams from the old DLO would not use the AOF, as it was the *acquisition* operating framework, and therefore seen as biased to the DPA, and not relevant to the ex DLO team members who were then in DE&S (Shaw, 2007-2010e).

It appears then that the creation of the new DE&S identity could be seen as not universally popular:

*'One of the less popular things about the formation of the DE&S was the removal of all of the local branding. The fact that everybody had to use the same colour schemes, the same logo, all the local badges and things*

*were stripped out, in an attempt I'm sure to actually brand the DE&S as the DE&S as a whole, and I understand that and I did see that going on. But that, for all its good intentions, had a slightly negative effect within teams because it left them slightly in limbo as to what their loyalties were when the DE&S formed' (Shaw, 2011t).*

It appears that the intent to create one identity for DE&S, and therefore 'One DE&S', was hampered by factors such as group size, with DE&S being too large a group for people to be loyal to at that time, especially as Operating Centres and teams had their own identities, and were trying to maintain and re-establish those identities.

*'I know the intent was to forge loyalties to the DE&S, but that's slightly too big an organisation and what we've seen since is sub-groups, largely functional groups within the DE&S, trying to re-establish their own identities. So logos and things and slight variations to the branding and particular selections of the colour schemes form the palette being used in individual areas to just cement those identities' (Shaw, 2011t).*

The fact that DE&S allowed these multiple identities, suggests that DE&S was thought to be at that stage a fractured and multi-organisational cultural organisation. In addition to there being local logos, the following example from a C2 grade civil servant illustrates the existence of technical groups within DE&S that had their own identities that they thought of as brands:

*'...we've got a few different brands within the team that people [and] external customers, identified with before the formation [of DE&S] because they were around. Some of them have been around for about ten years or so, either carried over from the DLO or from other groups within DE&S when DE&S had been reorganised because it used to be TES [Technical Enabling Services]' (Shaw, 2011t).*

The existence of these brands indicates that group distinctiveness may be developed over a long period of time, a period which was often characterised by several organisational changes, each of which encompassed a change of name for the group in question. It also indicates that these brands had strength, because they had survived multiple organisational changes.

#### **4.3.4 Corporate Branding was Within a Hierarchy that Extended to the Team Level**

**Finding: Corporate branding and identity extended to labels that indicated the function and location of teams.**

The corporate identity guideline extended into the realm of geographical place markers and labels that teams used to identify where they were. These labels were written in the organisational dialect of the team to which they belonged, which was often expressed as an acronym. The labelling followed the hierarchy of teams and groups, from Operating Centre down to functional sub teams. For example, the following response is from a B2 grade civil servant from Operating Centre A:

*‘...Where you work has a corporate identity as regarding labels or sort of signs that stick down from the ceiling, magnetic ones, so you know wherever you are, [ for example] downstairs on the second floor or upstairs on the third floor, so you have that corporate identity and that label... I mean there’s distinct teams as well because there’s obviously distinct sub-team leaders with their own particular responsibilities’. (Shaw, 2011p).*

The respondent here identifies a split in the groups in his areas between corporate identities and team identities.

It also appears that the corporate identity acted as an umbrella over the team identities, but did not replace them. The idea of labels as being combined identity and navigation aids is echoed by a C1 civil servant from Operating Centre G:



*'We all have these little signs that hang down from the ceiling which says Policy Secretariat and that sort of thing, you know, Corporate Performance and Risk, Business Management, you know, things that I don't understand. And Press Office as well and Public Relations. So yes, I think they are identified. Whether they identify themselves, whether they have their own sort of serious identity or not I don't know, I suspect not' (Shaw, 2011j).*

There appeared to be a consistency in the application and understanding of the corporate labels that hung down from the ceiling. The examples shown indicate that the implementation of the corporate branding and identity guideline had a positive purpose, as navigation aids for group members and to describe a more corporate identity at the Operating Centre level.

But this application of labels also made the distinction between the corporate and Project Team output more visible, thus highlighting difference, rather than similarity and the 'One DE&S'. It also served to highlight the different reasons that people worked there:

*'I think because we [DE&S] were such a big organisation there were various sub-groups if you like, and you'll get a one group who you could say will follow everything we do, were very keen on any updates, on the future of DE&S because they might be in the fast stream set, or because they toe the line and they don't want to go away from that whereas you get other groups who you might say they come here because it's a job. They're not interested that it's the MOD, or DE&S it just pays their bill'. (Shaw, 2011t).*

An additional effect of these labels on group behaviour appeared to be that because, as will be shown later in section 4.7.2, groups were linguistically differentiated, geographical labels also acted as signifiers of in-groups and also of out-groups. Therefore it could be said that the imposition of the DE&S identity standards actually exacerbated the visible fracturing of DE&S, rather than

signifying unity. The fracturing of identity and the multi-cultural nature of the organisation appeared to be an enduring trait within DE&S. The fractured culture may then be linked to behaviour in that some people and groups may follow the organisational dictats, but some may not, as shown in the previous responses, as will be shown later in more specific circumstances relating to attitudes that were displayed in relation to adopting new lanyards.

#### **4.3.5 Summary**

The removal of old local brands in favour of the imposed DE&S branding was felt throughout DE&S, and the replacement of those old brands with new local DE&S brands may have been a factor in forcing people to indicate their loyalty to a particular group. The actions by DE&S may, unintentionally or not, have had the effect of reinforcing the fracturing of identities through the legitimised use of branded clothing, labelling and different lanyards confirming that an implied multi-cultural approach to DE&S as an organisation was taken. This was then a paradox of DE&S policy, where DE&S wanted both a coherent '*One DE&S*', but also allowed groups to possess and manifest their own identities below the corporate level.

#### **4.3.6 Lanyards**

**Finding: Lanyards were a flexible symbol of identity in the new DES but the new DE&S lanyards were not universally accepted, and so lanyards could become a divisive rather than a unifying factor.**

A very personal and visible element of the transition of identities from the DPA and the DLO to the DE&S identity was the lanyard that civilian and many military staff wore and on which their security passes were hung. On the creation of DE&S a single corporate lanyard was imposed on staff.

The following example of old identities was provided by a C1 civil servant in Operating Centre D. Beside this person's desk, there was a loop of lanyards hanging on the wall.<sup>37</sup>



**Photograph 4-3 Referential Identities Manifest Through Lanyards**

Source Derek Shaw

When asked, the informant indicated that the lanyards represented all of the groups that they had worked in while in the Ministry of Defence. They used them as a reminder of the good things that they had achieved (Shaw, 2012b). This was as contrasted by how they felt about DE&S: they stated that they did not feel positively about DE&S and the merger, indicating instead that they felt that they did not fit in the new organisation.

Lanyards were a pragmatic and symbolic method of marking identity and affiliation. They could also be used as a symbolic representation of cultural drag because they also acted as mechanisms through which a group member could access, and also show to other group members, an identity where in the past, *things were different*, or, *we did things better then*, as was indicated by this informant.

Within the DE&S corporate branding scheme, each Operating Centre and, if they wanted to, each team was allowed to retain, develop, maintain, and manifest its

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<sup>37</sup> Only six are shown as the others were duplicates.

own functional, cultural, geographical, and historical identity/ies. Some of the group identities that were present in DE&S were so fragmented that the groups were unable, and occasionally unwilling, to be joined together as the new construct of DE&S.

Group members in Project Teams, in general, appeared to prefer wearing a lanyard that showed affiliation to a Role Team or Project Team, and then their next choice would be to wear a lanyard that showed their Operating Centre, rather than a DE&S lanyard. This indicates that there was a collective resistance against DE&S' original intent to behave as a single organisation. As a result, and in spite of senior management's intent, allowances were made that enabled Operating Centres and Project Teams to possess their own identities while in some way adhering to the DE&S corporate branding guidelines.



**Photograph 4-4 Example of Hierarchy of Lanyards Within DE&S**

Source: Derek Shaw

Photograph 4-4 shows an indicative example of the potential hierarchy of lanyards within one Operating Centre.

- At the top: the DE&S corporate lanyard, Defence Equipment and Support, with the ratified pennant logo.
- The centre lanyard: an Operating Centre lanyard, Weapons

- The lower lanyard: a Project Team level lanyard, Defence Munitions 'Safety First'.

In Operating Centre D, during the research period there were also at least six other team brands, including military lanyards. Military staff could wear either their military lanyard or both, thus again indicating multiple group memberships. This was in addition to other DLO, DPA, precursor organisations, or other lanyards that were worn, occasionally as acts of defiance against the corporate identity that was being imposed on people.

It appears then that although the legitimised lanyards *'all come from the same stable* (Shaw, 2011t) in terms of colours and corporate logo, the act of allowing these different variations of the corporate symbolic system to exist, contributed to the existence of one of the factors in the fracturing of the DE&S identity, that of group distinctiveness. Fragmentation of identity through the use of lanyards in DE&S was explicitly allowed because there were Operating Centres and Project Teams as groups that viewed themselves as being separate from DE&S. The hierarchy of lanyards was at the highest level, DE&S branding, followed by Operating Centre branding, and then each project team could have their own branding or co-branding with industry partners.

Examples of defiance in terms of wearing lanyards were observed at all levels throughout DE&S.

Even though the corporate guidance expected senior staff to adhere to the branding guideline and wear a DE&S lanyard, it appears that this was not always the case:

*'.... I don't wear a purple<sup>38</sup> [pointing to their lanyard], one of these. I actually refused to at the beginning because I couldn't take all the branding that was going on with it. ... I really got very distressed at the boundaries*

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<sup>38</sup> The colour attributed to MOD, and DE&S, as opposed to the Green of the Army, Light Blue of the RAF or Dark Blue of the RN.

*and the barriers between the [MOD] Head Office and the DPA and then the merger came along with a very strong branding for DE&S and I just couldn't buy into it at all. And so I've never worn a purple lanyard, I've always stuck to my blue one [a standard colour available at all sites where people have misplaced their lanyard]. I'm probably mellowing on it a bit now, but it got to the point interestingly where I think I was in a meeting that CDM<sup>39</sup> must have been chairing and he was having a go about people wearing different team lanyards and DPA lanyards and trying to get this sense that we were all one organisation. And I think the head of the internal communications team was in this meeting as well and a day or so later I was talking to someone behind me, heard somebody drop something on my desk, turned around and a DE&S lanyard had been dropped on my desk. I just found that a step way too far'. (Shaw, 2011h).*

The above is from a civilian SCS 1\*, and it could be viewed as subversion of the corporate aim, and going against group norms. Their response described the group boundaries that they encountered and the imposition of the DE&S identity that they encountered on their return from working at Head Office.<sup>40</sup>

Because of their hierarchical position and also the role and the function that they performed, they were pressured to conform and to be part of the 'One DE&S' and to show that conformity by wearing the corporate lanyard. They objected to this, as they saw their work-based identity as being firstly a MOD civil servant and secondly part of DE&S, and not the other way around.

This response illustrates several things: the nested identities as described by Pate et al. (2010), Kirke's transferrable axes of identity (2007d), and also Ellemers' multiple identities (Ellemers, 2005), the possible existence of neo-tribal characteristics of multiple group memberships and identity symbols as described by Maffesoli (1998), Price and Cybulski (2007), Hilder (2004) as described in

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<sup>39</sup> Chief of Defence Materiel.

<sup>40</sup> Main Building, Whitehall.

section 2.7 and also a hierarchy of identities brought about by the meaningfulness of the group to the group member (Evans and Carson, 2005) all existed in DE&S. The response also shows that the imposition of DE&S and its identity were not universally accepted, and that staff did not all immediately identify with DE&S. This can be seen in the way that many staff responded on vesting day.

In Operating Centre A on vesting day, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, the new DE&S lanyards were being handed out to staff by Business Managers, with the instruction to *get rid of the old lanyards* (Shaw, 2007b).<sup>41</sup>

The old lanyards had the Support Group, PDG (Procurement Development Group),<sup>42</sup> branding on them as shown in Photograph 4-5.



**Photograph 4-5 Pre-DE&S Lanyards in Operating Centre A**

Source: Derek Shaw

The strength of the psychological bond, and the corresponding emotional investment that people had invested in the DPA were clear. For example, the researcher witnessed a woman coming down the floor-plate in tears: *'I'm not wearing one of those new lanyards, I joined DPA, I didn't join DE&S, I'm a DPA girl'* (Shaw, 2007b). This type and strength of identity is discussed by, for example, Hogg and others, and indicates the importance and consequences of organisations not recognising that employee's constructions of identity are

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<sup>41</sup> Vesting day of the merger of the DPA and the DLO.

<sup>42</sup> DPA organisational structures were Integrated Project Teams and Support Groups.

important to the person and to their commitment and identification with the organisational goals. It also indicates that the psychological bond and contract is something that is too important to be overlooked during a period of organisational change and merger (Hogg, 2003, Ilka et al., 2009, Knippenberg et al., 2002, Paulsen, 2003, Seidl, 2005, Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen, 2001). But this bond, with the old team, and the consequences of not managing how it was broken, appeared to be overlooked at the time of the merger of the DPA and the DLO.

The lack of a positive identification by staff with DE&S, combined with the existence of active dis-identification with other specific groups, was also seen to be enacted against industry partners who tried to imposed a single identity onto a group:

*'...I could tell you the honest story about why I'm wearing a poppy lanyard, I thought actually how close am I to DE&S, probably not that close and what gives me my energy and why I actually work in this area was to ensure that the guys at the front line get the best kit, so actually my allegiance was to the front line, Hence the poppies'. (Shaw, 2011h).*

This respondent, a B1 grade civil servant team leader in Operating Centre D, encapsulated both sides of that situation and appears to agree that identification with groups followed a hierarchy within DE&S and also that the hierarchy appeared to match the ideologies of the DPA and the DLO that were latent within DE&S. The creation of hierarchically contextualised identities in DE&S appeared to be linked to the way that group members identified with their Role Team and front line first, rather than with DE&S, or even their Operating Centre. Why might this be? Could it be due to the higher levels of interaction between group members within smaller groups as opposed to a larger one? Perhaps this enabled a greater number of stronger bonds to be developed between group members in small groups as opposed to fewer weaker bonds within larger groups.



This then appeared to permit the disassociation of group members with DE&S and the replacement of that association with, and by, their Role Team.

Military uniforms were also worn by military personnel while in DE&S, these were a further symbol within the multi-layered symbolic system that indicated affiliation to groups, and differentiation between groups. Nested and non-contradictory identities were also illustrated by responses that appear to reinforce the view that DE&S group identities were fractured, but this fracturing was not necessarily a negative trait. Within those functional, fractured identities, personal identities could also be nested within a hierarchy, within which there might be a strong reliance on historical referential identities that could be linked to loyalty to team, service, cloth, family and *the lads and lasses on the front line*. The existence of hierarchies, multiplicities of identities, and nested identities can also be seen in the following interview:

*'...I think in some ways it depends on the context. If I'm speaking to someone at Ensleigh then I'd probably tell them that I worked for Safety and Engineering, because there's a mix of different operators, operation teams centres on site, if I was chatting to friends who weren't in the Civil Service I'd say that I worked for the MOD, and identify most strongly with the MOD, I'd identify myself as working as that, so in some ways it would depend on the context. I don't know, DE&S I feel as a sort of entity to identity with was probably easier to identify with DE&S than with the MOD, because the MOD, was so big' (Shaw, 2011t).*

The respondent was a graduate engineer who also confirmed the existence of a group size component in the meaningfulness of identification of the individual with groups that they were a member of. Once again group size appeared to be a criterion that affected the strength of identification of a group member to a group, with the MOD, the larger organisation, and much more nebulous than DE&S, being more difficult to identify which is itself a large organisation.

However, even if staff in DE&S did not identify with DE&S, they still worked and were committed to achieving the superordinate goal of DE&S, which was supporting the *front-line*:

*'Well I don't particularly want to be associated with DE&S full stop as an organisation. The reason why...one of the reasons actually I work for the MOD, is for the work that we do for the guys who are on the front line'*(Shaw, 2011h).

This response from a C1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre B introduces a dichotomy of not identifying with DE&S but of being committed to the '*front line*', thus indicating the paradox of ethos versus culture by working for DE&S, but identifying with the '*front-line*'. This dichotomy will be explored in more detail later in this thesis.

### 4.3.7 Badges

**Finding:** In addition to lanyards, badges were used as symbol of identity and these symbols could also symbols of division among groups.

In addition to lanyards and labels, there were other legitimised identity markers. Photograph 4-6 and Photograph 4-7 show how team and personal Identity was marked in two Operating Centres.



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**Photograph 4-6 Role Team Badge**

Source Derek Shaw

Photograph 4-6 shows the symbol of affiliation for members of Scout SV team (MOD, 2014b). Badges were only given to team members and were not given to non-members. Social categorisation in this group appeared to be binary, a group member either had a badge and was visibly in the team, or they did not.

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<sup>43</sup> Copyright Derek Shaw.



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#### **Photograph 4-7 Operating Centre Affiliation Badge**

Source Derek Shaw

The social categorisation shown in Photograph 4-7 was more nuanced because there were different coloured badges that signified different levels of internal reward and affiliation. The blue badge pictured belonged to the researcher who was associated with the Operating Centre, but who was not a member of it.

A bronze badge denoted a new entrant or being in the Operating Centre 1-5 years, a silver badge denoted 5-10 years' service, and a gold badge 10 years or more service. Thus this Operating Centre categorised in great detail and provided symbols that visibly showed those categorisation boundaries both externally to other Operating Centres and non-members, and also internally within the Operating Centre.

It appears then that the DE&S identity guidelines, and the implementation of those guidelines in teams and Operating Centres in the form of badges and lanyards, allowed teams to be distinct within the boundaries of the 'One DE&S'.

Social categorisation was therefore legitimised by DE&S within its subsidiary Operating Centres, thus making it more difficult for there to be "One DE&S", and consequently a single DE&S organisational culture:

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<sup>44</sup> Copyright Derek Shaw.

*...People were seeing themselves as being associated with a Project Team, they were not seeing themselves as either part of the Operating Centre, or of DE&S' (Shaw, 2013a).*

Thus, the identity and implied culture of DE&S was observed to be binary in nature, with the core characterisations being a bureaucratic identity and Project Team/Delivery Team identity. For example, the 2\* in Operating Centre D organised his Operating Centre such that the floor-plate that he sat on was occupied by leadership and bureaucratic staff. All of these groups were primarily bureaucratic, performing reporting and management functions and supporting different levels of leadership. The Project Teams were on different floorplates and carried out the engineering and project tasks that directly, as opposed to indirectly, produced equipment and supported the frontline. (Shaw, 2010-2014)

This separation was deliberate, but the effects of the separation, the development of the in-group and out-group of the project teams and their effort against the bureaucratic effort of the 'Operating Centre' were unintended consequences of the separation.

While this boundary between the projects and the bureaucracy of DE&S can be shown to be *true*, it is a simplification of the complexity of *identity* and also of the multiplicity of organisational and social *cultures* in DE&S. That complexity and multiplicity will be revealed throughout chapter 4.

#### 4.3.8 Tensions and Asymmetric Dress Codes

**Finding: the existence of asymmetric dress codes led to tension between groups.**

In DE&S affiliation to groups was, in addition to the wearing of lanyards shown through the legitimised distinctiveness of dress, through the wearing of a uniform by military personnel:

*'...I think it is differentiation actually. I think when I'm, as an individual, going off to see a frontline Commander, I always put on the combats rather than another form of working dress, which was sort of more office dress, deliberately wanting to be focussed, this is about supporting operations. I think when visitors come the same thing applies and I notice that the military staff will always put their combats on when they've got a visitor coming. But I think if it's a positive discrimination in terms of 'look we're in this team, we're all in it together, and we're doing this job because it's what's best for the customer' then that's great. If it's "we're in it together, nobody else understands you, they're all bastards and they all keep picking at us' then that's bad. So I'd only promote the positive aspects which were conducive to the outputs that we want to deliver to defence...'(Shaw, 2011s).*

This respondent Identified with the British Army, of which he was a member, and the 'front-line'.

Distinctiveness of identity in DE&S through the use of clothing could be characterised as being binary, the two forms being that military personnel wore military uniforms (Bain, 2008, Cooke, 2008, MOD, 2004, Royal Navy, 2002a, Royal Navy, 2002b) and that civilians wore business wear. This simple characterisation, however, hid many nuances and codes, thus chiming with the work of Lurie (1981), Pratt and Rafaeli (1993), Pratt and Rafaeli (1997), Pratt (1997), and also Rafaeli (1997) on the multi-layered nature of symbolism as

expressed through clothes, but in an obviously different organisational context, that of DE&S.

While military personnel could very obviously dress within a formal set of rules, there appeared to be a different level of legitimisation of the differing dress codes in DE&S, which led to tensions between military personnel and civilian staff. The differences in the perception of, and the performance of, a uniformed identity produced several consequences. One consequence was the existence of the stereotype which was portrayed within DE&S and also the wider MOD as, *you can tell the difference between the military and the civil service, just look at their shoes.*

This stereotype broke down, as stereotypes tend to, when the detail was observed, as many civil servants obviously knew how to polish their shoes.

But this stereotype may have arisen because the civil service did not have a formally prescribed dress code or uniform, and they were therefore perceived, by predominantly military personnel, to have a greater freedom to supposedly express the civil servant's personal identity through the use of clothing.

This led to the view that was often expressed by military personnel, that civil servants could be somehow less professional in their work than the military who wore a uniform at work, and who took pride in wearing that uniform, and who had been taught how to wear it, something that Bourdieu (1977) described as their *habitus and bodily hexis*, as a British Army Lieutenant Colonel said during his interview:

*'...There's other cultural issues here as well, you know Fridays, [which are designated as 'dress down days'] this place looks like a holding zone for the Jeremy Kyle show. I mean I've never seen anything like it. Here, some of these lot look like they're going on a fight down the pub, some of them, look a sack of crap. And if you've got contractors come around, sorry? I mean it's rugby shirts, t-shirts, shorts, flip flops, it's the whole gamut, it just*

*doesn't give the ethos of a professional organisation dedicated to providing effect out to [operational] theatre...' (Shaw, 2011h).*

Within this characterisation, the groups that dressed smartly looked down on groups that dressed less formally. They appeared to believe that being scruffy was a symbol that described the person's lack of professionalism. This view was most often expressed in the vernacular language of DE&S, as *scuttle*, which was rumour and disgruntlement expressed unofficially.

On occasion, the tension was formalised and raised through official channels, such as the 'Talk to the Board'(DE&S, 2015) question and response in the following example:

*'...Whilst in the CS [Civil Service] I have also worked for a Line-Manager who cautioned me that, when visiting a military unit, people would probably speak to me first, assuming I was more senior to him. When I asked him why he thought this, he replied: 'Because you wear a suit to work and I wear jeans and a 'T' shirt'. He was right!..... Can you confirm whether it is, or was not, the intention of the (Management) Board to bring in a dress code for civilian staff working in DE&S?...' (Shaw, 2011c).*

The tension expressed in this way appeared to centre on the manifestation of the difference in the legitimisation of dress codes. As the question shows, subjective judgements could be made subconsciously as to the professionalism of those who did not follow a *military dress code*, in this case, civil servants who wore jeans.

And as this Talk To The Board question asks:

*'...I really feel that the chance to 'express yourself' should be left outside the 'front office' of a large government department. .... I realise that as a serviceman I will probably be viewed as somewhat of a dinosaur, but we wear uniform for a myriad of reasons, one of the first being corporate image/team association, another being that being dressed appropriately*



*engenders a sense of discipline. Frankly, some of the clothing worn within the bounds of Abbeywood would be suitable for a downmarket sixth-form college, or perhaps downtown Bristol on a sunny day, but should not be acceptable in a government office. As servicemen we were often told not to allow an 'us and them' attitude to develop between [Armed] forces personnel and civil servants [CS]—the lax policy on CS clothing was no help to that aim, and threatens to devalue the image of the group to the detriment of those who were not only high calibre individuals but can also be bothered to try to look the part of serious government employees...'* (DE&S, 2015).

The responses that were given to these questions indicate how social categorisation, which was legitimised by DE&S and also the MOD through military dress regulations (Bain, 2008, Cooke, 2008, Shaw, 2015f, MOD, 2004), could produce negative boundaries between different cultural groups, in this case between the military and civilians. The stereotype of civil servants being less professional, portrayed within these questions, appeared to be validated by the response given by a 3\* British Army General and DE&S board member:

*'...To answer your question directly, it was not the intention of the Board to introduce a Dress Code for civilian staff at the DE&S. You have expressed a personal view about dress, indeed every day (not just Friday) you do, by what you wear, you have that choice. I also expressed a personal view that I felt that some would benefit from other influences in making up their own minds about dress...'* (DE&S, 2015).

This response may indicate several factors, the board respondent was a member of the same military group, the Army, and therefore he may have been supporting the person who asked the questions because they were of the same group.

He may also have been expressing his own discontent about dress codes and scruffy civilians, which chimes with the work of Bain and his findings on cultural differences in Defence Acquisition (Bain, 2008). Implied within this response is

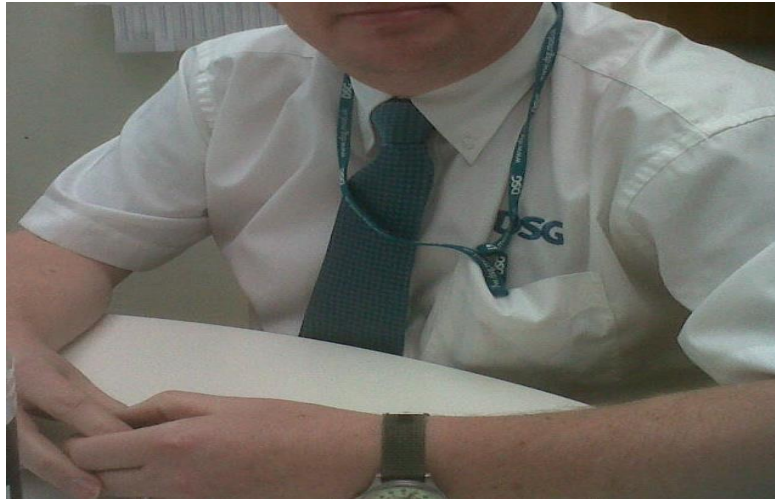
a trait that was carried over from the military culture in that a group member expected to be told how to do everything. The respondent also appeared to be distancing himself from the Board by putting forward a personal view, implying that he personally believed that a dress code would be useful, but that the board did not actually think this.

While not actually wearing military uniforms, some civil servants in specific teams did dress differently from others through the purchase of '*team clothing*' such as sweatshirts. This made them visually fit in more with the uniformed organisations. This uniform provided civil servants with an identity that was both symbolic and pragmatic. Uniforms and clothing appeared to signal the creation of both a more corporate identity at a team level and also a visible group boundary.

This boundary was hierarchically visible at an SCS 2\*/1\* or Project Team level.<sup>45</sup> The provision of a work based uniform was not limited to military personnel. Photograph 4-8 shows a C1 grade civil servant in DSG, the Disposal Services Group.

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<sup>45</sup> For example In Operating Centre D each depot had its own sweatshirts emblazoned with the name of the depot.



**Photograph 4-8 Example of Civilian Identity Through Corporate clothing**

Source Derek Shaw

This group had been given their own, non-DE&S, corporate identity through the use of clothing, in preparation for being privatised (Shaw, 2013d). The employee pictured here had been supplied with a tie of the appropriate colour, texture and material, a lanyard to match and a branded shirt.

The action of DE&S in providing civilians in this instance, with a uniform was a deliberate attempt to create a total visual identity for this group that differed from the rest of DE&S. This separation appeared to be intended to support a different work psychology, that of being *private sector* and different to the civil service because this group were being prepared to be sold off to the private sector in order to improve services and also to save the MOD money (MOD, 2015d).

Thus social categorisation could be used, as it appeared to be in this instance, to enforce difference between a DE&S group and the rest of DE&S and to make the target group more similar to, and to behave as though they were a private sector organisation. This thesis gathered no data on the effectiveness of that organisational change and so cannot comment on its success or otherwise.

This thesis discusses identity through, amongst other methods, the use of clothing as a cultural delimiter that allowed the combined expression of identity,

power and behaviour differences and also social categorisation between the military, and civilian employees to be made more explicit. Cultural differences between the military and civilian staff over uniforms appeared to amplify tensions between the military and civil service culture:

*‘...a Major who shared a workspace with us, when he came back in wearing uniform, I asked him ‘are you glad to be back in uniform?’ and he said to me ‘yes’, and I said ‘does it make any difference at meetings?’ and he said ‘yes it allows the civilians to know who they’re working for’ (Shaw, 2010p).*

The existence of cultural tension shown in the above example, from a Senior Executive Officer (SEO) civil servant working in Operating Centre C. The view expressed here, of the civil servants serving the military rather than everyone working together as one team, indicates the existence of several themes that appeared within DE&S where the use of uniform and dress to achieve and/or manipulate outcome or feeling was felt to be legitimate. It also reinforces the concept of commitment to the *lads and lasses on the front line*, but the reinforcement here comes from the military, because the military individual believes that that they are in charge.

The following respondent, a 1\* Naval Officer, provides a contrasting view of the usefulness of the difference between the civil service and the military, in this case the Royal Navy.

*‘And therefore the fact that I happen to be in uniform, in some respects, helps me to do DE&S’s job a bit better. In a couple of instances, possibly less so...’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

They showed how the uniform could be used to achieve a purpose when meeting with people who did not wear the same uniform, by creating a visible difference that appeared to enable power to be shown and also to enable, for example, civil servants to be reminded of the ‘front-line’.

### 4.3.9 Dress and Uniform: Expressing Underlying Discontent

**Finding: Dress and uniform were used as a proxy to express discontent about changes in terms and conditions in the British Army, with the blame for those changes being attributed to civil servants.**

In relation to the context of forced identity changes, the uniform changes that occurred within the British Army during the research period were also pertinent. The researcher had observed that British Army personnel, who were permanently based in Abbeywood, changed their style of uniforms.

*‘They came back into the neighbourhood as a group, they had obviously been to a meeting, but they were all smart, wearing a uniform that the researcher had not seen before: smart trousers, a jumper, and stable belt. They were not in MTP<sup>46</sup> or C95. They were all the same except for one male, who instead of shoes, was wearing open-toed sandals and no socks’* (Shaw, 2013n).

Prior to this date, in summer 2013 the majority of the British Army staff at Abbeywood normally wore Combat 95 (C95) uniform, normal day wear for Army personnel, or No 2 uniform, or on special occasions, their Dress Uniform. C 95 was known by those who wore it, and some that did not, as *pyjamas*, and, if not in the British army, the people that wore them were likely to be called *cabbages*. At this point in time, it appeared that the British Army personnel who were stationed at Abbeywood changed to a new form of dress, wearing khaki barrack dress trousers, and the khaki shirt from No. 2 dress with a coloured pullover of an authorised regimental pattern and a stable belt.

A Lieutenant Colonel in Operating Centre D provided the first answer to the question, *‘Why had the Army changed uniform in Abbeywood?’* His response was enlightening, starting with, *‘it (the old uniform) was more comfortable’* and

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<sup>46</sup> MTP = Multi Terrain Pattern.

was a *'cost saving'* even though *'you need to iron it more'*, he then added that *'it was because of a civil servant in the Have Your Say Survey,<sup>47</sup> or asking a board question, saying they didn't like the military wearing uniforms in the office, because it was intimidating'* (Shaw, 2013q). These statements appeared to be contradictory, because the justification for wearing C95 was that it was more comfortable for the Army, but the civilians did not like to see a uniform being worn in the office. This conflation of pragmatism and negative social categorisation required investigation. A civil servant who worked in a British Army Project Team, and so was more embedded in the DE&S British Army sub-culture than was the researcher, provided comments that supported the first response but from a different perspective, from the civil service, and with the one addition *'they [the military] always blame the Civil Servants'* (Shaw, 2013o).

The comments made by the Lt Colonel appear to show a construction of otherness in relation to dress between military group members, in this case the British Army and civil servants who worked alongside the military.

The British Army appear to view themselves in a positive light, and civil servants as a negative one. According to the Lt Colonel, the Civil Service as a whole, rather than simply a specific person, did not like the use of a particular identity signifier, the uniform. That statement was then used as justification of the reason that the whole Army dress had to change, surely this was not right? Pragmatically, in a process-based hierarchical organisation such as the MOD, the change must have been mandated from the Defence Board. (MOD, 2015e).

The changes that were observed to the uniform were made as a result of the Future Army Dress Programme. In this instance, the discontent associated with a change in uniform had been used as a proxy for the expression of discontent about changes to terms and conditions and redundancies throughout the Army structure (Shaw, 2013p). This adds to the weight of evidence, that in DE&S

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<sup>47</sup> The Annual employee engagement and satisfaction survey.

uniform and identity could reinforce groups and their boundaries and also cause division between the groups that may have acted against the central ethos of DE&S.

Section 4.3. has presented a traditional, pragmatic and symbolic view of identity within DE&S. It has shown that these manifestations of identity enabled the legitimisation of social categorisation within groups and by DE&S and that embedded categorisation, therefore, formed an element of legitimised group distinctiveness which affected group behaviour in DE&S during the research period.

Section 4.4 reports the geographical identity and the symbolic and pragmatic marking of territory in DE&S.

## **4.4 Geographical Identity – Marking Territory**

**Finding: Territorial identity marking follows the group size hierarchy in DE&S, from organisational space to personal space via a series of symbolic and pragmatic markers and behaviours.**

Within DE&S, it was observed that group identity could be geographically defined. There was a hierarchy to this stratification which mirrored the group sizes and groups within DE&S. Because of the nature of geographic identity in DE&S, photo-ethnography was a useful tool to capture and show some of the manifestations of geographic identity and group distinctiveness.

Section 4.4 presents examples of the formal and informal geographic identity marking mechanisms within DE&S, from outside the physical architecture of Abbeywood, across two Operating Centres, Operating Centre D and Operating Centre E and finishing at a person's personal space, their desk.

Photograph 4-9 shows the entrance at Abbeywood, which was at the front of the site and was approached from a road which is an open transitory space.



**Photograph 4-9 DE&S Abbeywood**

Source: MOD (2015b)



On approaching the site, the external boundaries were visually apparent: the decorative white painted low fence, not visible in this photograph, and the lake. This makes it more discrete, creating a softer manifestation of the *other*, which was reinforced visually by the apparatus and personnel of security, observing and managing the boundary.

The buildings are distinctive, as was the lake, called in the vernacular, '*the moat*'.<sup>48</sup> These symbols represent identity boundaries between those inside the boundary and those who remain outside. The existence of the lake, or the 'moat' enabled some DE&S staff, who were not located at Abbeywood, to call Abbeywood '*Fantasy Island*' (Shaw, 2013b) or '*Tracey Island*' (Shaw, 2015d) thus expressing a negative stereotype group identity, and also confirming the concept of architecture creating and affecting group identity, see for example the findings of Abel and others, Abel (2010), Vellinga (2007), Wegerhoff (2008), Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010), Van Marrewijk (2009).

The 'moat' thus appears to perform as a physical, psychological, and potentially pejorative boundary. The lake performs several functions: some decorative, some ecological, some security based, but all are boundary functions. The lake drains water from the site, provides habitat for wild birds and also provides a setting for staff to relax in when they are not being *desk jockeys*.<sup>49</sup> It also acts as a frame to set off the architecture of the site, and as a security feature for this very publicly visible side of the site.

Looking like a castle, the architecture of the buildings appears defensive and shows how modern architecture can be used to create the idea that the occupants need to protect themselves from attack. It also acts as a mechanism of categorisation, as anyone not in the castle is, by necessity, an outsider. It projects a sense of aloofness and, by extension, insiders are cut off from the

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<sup>48</sup> Not visible in this photo are the DE&S flag and the Union Flag and there is also a separate flag pole on which other flags are flown to mark special occasions.

<sup>49</sup> A pejorative term, often associated with the RAF, given to people who 'fly' a desk, rather than aircraft (where they might be called 'desk jockeys').

outside world, thus symbolising the boundary between the MOD and everyone else. The buildings might also be viewed as a symbol of pride, confidence and arrogance, harking back to a time of historic conflict and signifying a pride in Britain's historic past. This, then, is a visible and multi-sensory boundary between those who are permitted to cross it, and those who are not.

As with many symbolic boundaries, the lake has many myths and in-jokes that are associated with it. The following was attributed to a new member of the DPA<sup>50</sup> when they were receiving their initial tour of the site: *'Is that where you keep the submarines then?'* This was then assimilated and embellished within the folklore of the site. It is still used as a boundary maintenance mechanism between old and new members of the site, being used to *wind up* new members: *'That's where we keep the submarines, there is a tunnel to the Bristol Channel'*.

In order to legitimately breach this physical boundary between the outside and the inside, certain conditions must be met. The person must be invited or already be a member of 'Team Defence' to pass through. This is a physical boundary that controls access which is stratified depending on the person's security clearance.

These levels of security clearance may be called by this thesis, *access or permissive identities*, depending on the person's position in that security hierarchy, because they would be subject to pragmatic boundaries: for example, they would be unable to access certain areas. These security boundaries are also marked by physical and pragmatic symbols, such as personnel being given different coloured passes or lanyards depending on their hierarchical place. A visitor would also cross linguistic boundaries as they entered the site where open and free-flowing language changes to the guarded, indoctrinated and closed language that is used within secure groups.

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<sup>50</sup> Defence Procurement Agency.

The concept of geographic identity was also expressed similarly in non-Abbeywood locations, as shown in the following example from a B1 grade Commercial Officer:

*‘...You know that typical depot type mentality that generations were there for 30, 40 years and they felt safe and they felt actually quite wedded to, not to the organisation, but to the depot, it’s funny it was a local thing, you felt very wedded to the depot’ (Shaw, 2011t).*

Geographic identity appeared to have a link to both stability of being in one place for a length of time and also group size, because the depot is smaller than the organisation. This indicates that geographic identity appears to have similarities to other forms of identity in that it appeared to be expressed more strongly towards smaller groups that may be called teams, rather than larger groups that may be called organisations.

Moving inside the physical boundary of DE&S into the Operating Centre hierarchy, there were located models of equipment such as that seen in Operating Centre D, where an inert model of a Stormshadow™ Missile was located, see Photograph 4-10 Stormshadow™.



**Photograph 4-10 Stormshadow™**

Source: Andrew Linnet, Crown Copyright.

This artefact was temporally current, in that it was a weapon that was in service with the RAF at the time that the photograph was taken. The location of this

artefact was within the neighbourhood of this Operating Centre in the main walkway from a car park onto the main site. This may, therefore, be interpreted as being a gate guardian as it marked part of that Operating Centre, in a space that was both transitional and boundary.

It may also be interpreted pragmatically as being placed there because it was too large to go elsewhere (Shaw, 2014r). The placement of this artefact signalled to other group members that they were entering an area which was *owned* by that Operating Centre.

Boundary changes could also signify linguistic changes. Past this particular boundary the language was a specific functional dialect, that of *Weapons*. This weapons dialect was coloured by the main language of civil service bureaucratese, with flavourings of each of the military and functional languages depending on the project team, but it remained distinct from the language of other areas, such as Ships, or Submarines. These dialect differences produced boundaries within this Operating Centre and also produced boundaries that people outside may have had difficulty negotiating, because they used a different dialect. Language is discussed in section 4.7

It was not only current identities that were considered to be important. Historical identities, aligned with pride and loyalty ran very deep within DE&S, its members and those of the precursor organisations. In Operating Centre D, at its entrance, was a wall display of historical swords and flint and match lock pistols and carbines. Photograph 4-11, shows these artefacts that were not contemporary, but which were historically symbolic.



**Photograph 4-11 Swords Pistols and Cutlasses Mark Territory**

Source: Andrew Linnet, Crown Copyright

These artefacts signalled to visitors that the group has been involved in successful warfare for a long time, because they were historical and symbolic, rather than temporally current.

They were not located in full view of any member of DE&S, but were only in view of those who had reason to either visit or pass through that floor area, which in this case was an open area on level 1 of the neighbourhood. This shows how symbolic marking of territory occurred on many levels, some of which were not immediately visible to any visitor, or indeed staff member. This was again a transitional, boundary space, but at a lower organisational level, that of the Project Team, rather than the Operating Centre, where Stormshadow™ resides.

Regular visitors that passed through this area could also include members of Operating Centre E who worked in an adjoining neighbourhood, but the symbols marked the entrance to the Operating Centre D floorplate, thus reinforcing a different layer of group geographical identity, that of the Project Team.

So far the artefacts shown that have been located in public areas within the geographical boundary of Operating D in Abbeywood. Territory was also marked within closed areas of DE&S. For example, in one meeting room that was located in Operating Centre D had on one wall a board that bore all the coats of arms of

the individual services that historically comprised the Masters of Ordnance. This can be seen in Photograph 4-12 History Marking Meeting Rooms as Territory.



**Photograph 4-12 History Marking Meeting Rooms as Territory**

Source: Andrew Linnet, Crown Copyright

The Ordnance Board has a long history, being extant in some form since the time of Henry V, taking on the name of 'The Ordnance Board' after the Boer War. On being subsumed into the MOD, it became the Defence Ordnance Safety Group.

The artefact displays the symbols of the combined services ordnance organisations that comprised the Ordnance Board and which had been moved from other sites to Abbeywood. This artefact, like many others had been preserved and moved from site to site on the many geographical moves that have accompanied organisational changes, in what can broadly be called *defence acquisition*. The meeting room that this artefact was displayed in was called the OB, or Ordnance Board Room. Also in this room was a daguerreotype etching of Lord Wellesley (The Duke of Wellington) with a piece of card attached to it that had his signature on it (Shaw, 2014j).

There were also, next to the OB room, the CINO room, named for the Chief Inspector of Naval Ordnance, and nearby, the Australia room, named because of the formal secondments that took place with the Australian Defence Force within this group (Shaw, 2007-2010).

Historical artefacts thus served to give group territorial legitimacy, both physically and symbolically, they also provided more examples of the symbolic, linguistic, and cultural boundaries that existed between groups. These artefacts being historically significant were likely to colour the attachment of group members to, and also their strength of identity with, their function and their purpose to support 'the lads and lasses on the front line'. While these items appeared to issue a symbolic challenge to visitors, they also acted as re-assurance to in-group members by demonstrating that they were part of a historically and functionally significant, and culturally bonded group. The Defence Ordnance Safety Group (DOSG) also possessed its own language, both functionally and historically. The DOSG dialect was informed by the MOD language, the language of each of the military services, by history, and also by the socio-technical language of explosives, ordnance, chemistry, and ballistics.

These characteristics, combined with the nature of the work that this group performed, provided a barrier to other groups interacting with this group except at specific, managed interactions. Group members, however, did not appear to consciously notice the links between the historical and the temporally current because they were apparently inured to them. It was part of their everyday life, they were living within the framework of symbols, and so not actually seeing it.

A further example of territory marking was observed in Operating Centre E which was a maritime Operating Centre. On the wall and at the entrance to this Operating Centre was a series of ships insignia.



**Photograph 4-13 Ships Insignia Marking Territory In A Public/Private Space**

Source: Andrew Linnet, Crown Copyright

These marked both vessels that had been built but also those that were supported by this group. The insignia were located on a wall in a semi-public area of the neighbourhood where Operating Centre E was located, in the same way as the artefacts that were displayed in Photograph 4-11. Both collections of artefacts marked the territory of 'their' group, and both appear to show how group distinctiveness was manifested in DE&S.

Role and Delivery Team identity and boundaries were manifest in Operating Centre E through the use of other physical artefacts and show how, in a private Role Team space, specific examples of some of the role functions of that group can be used to mark territory. Further examples of how territory was marked are the copper diving helmet, (see Photograph 4-14) and also the modern SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) diving equipment shown in Photograph 4-15.





**Photograph 4-14 and Photograph 4-15 Floor-plate Geographical Identity in Operating Centre E**

Source: Andrew Linnet, Crown Copyright

Group members not only referred back to these historical identities nostalgically, for example, *things were better/worse then*, but also they were supporting equipment that appeared to be constructed through that historical identity. This level of identification with the equipment also occurred even if they themselves were not part of that original group.

It appears then, that at Operating Centre level and below, each group would have their own gate guardians of equipment that marked the boundary to that Operating Centre, Neighbourhood, or floor-plate. Thus, geographic identity manifested as territory marking appeared to be a significant contributory factor to group distinctiveness and the production of group identities and boundaries.

The formal geographical identities that were identified were highly visible and were protected by formal and informal territory-marking within DE&S. Their visual presentation was legitimised and protected through the DE&S corporate branding policy (DE&S, 2012).

Geographic identity was also legitimised through the use of symbols and artefacts, such as ship's insignia, as seen in Photograph 4-13.

Context and function specific posters that related specifically to the role that was carried out by the team in that particular location (Shaw, 2013b), were also seen. These artefacts were often formally legitimised and could also possess organisational and personal historical significance.

*'These were my desks, this was our area. And we have the signs up and we have little colour coded desks so that if you're going to do a job for somebody else you go and sit on a blue desk or a yellow desk or a green desk and we're yellow, so you look round if you haven't got a desk in the morning because you know you can go and sit on a yellow desk, because that's your team, so I think the big differentiation at the moment, for us, was the territory' (Shaw, 2011).*

The existence of these physical, symbolic, and linguistic boundaries therefore suggests that it could be difficult to negotiate the visible coded boundaries unless one was in possession of and understood the code.

The pattern of boundary marking shown so far was continued within other Operating Centres, for example, the display of Flags and Aircraft models in Operating Centre I, suggesting that territory and boundary marking was part of the overall culture of DE&S.

#### 4.4.1 Desk booking – ‘Get Orf Moi Land...!’

**Finding: Geographic identity extended to the personal desk level in addition to being an organisational or team behaviour.**

At DE&S Abbeywood, in order to make more efficient use of the desk resources that were available, DE&S operated a flexi-desk, desk booking policy which operated in parallel with a clear desk policy. The flexi-desk system, however, meant that all desks were labelled as a corporate resource and did not ‘belong’ to any one person, unless there were reasons of disability for a member having, for example, a raised desk (Shaw, 2013b). The personal territory of the desk was the last, and the most local, element of a group member’s work life that they felt they had any power over. This led to a greater use of defence mechanisms of territory protection rather than engendering a more corporate, desk sharing attitude.

In terms of geographic identity, there were a series of behaviours that surrounded the booking of desks and the ensuing territory maintenance.

At a group level, the allocation of desks was delegated from the corporate DE&S to the Operating Centre via the provision and use of a corporate desk booking system (MOD, 2014a). Further delegation was made to the level of the SCS 1\*, who were responsible for the tactical operation of the system and the allocation of desks to staff within their area. A yet further level of delegation was achieved through the Team Leaders (B1 grade civil servants or their military equivalent) having the power to allocate desks locally and manage the system to suit their needs, and to create local identities, as one of them said:

*‘ although it’s flexible workspace and you’ve got to book your desk, again, and I suspect most people have done it, I’ve allocated areas which were primarily team areas and so the team have to manage the fact that they’ve got less desks than people but it’s team space. It doesn’t mean other people can’t book the desks, but broadly speaking if I want to find a*

*Commercial Officer they're all sitting in the same place. So you know, creating those identities I think was important for the team, it's also important for people to know where to go to find people and it's quite interesting just walking into the new building,<sup>51</sup> the signage was not particularly good and that'll be one of our biggest challenges. So it'll be interesting to see how that evolves' (Shaw, 2011r).*

In addition Project Team Leaders were able to exercise a degree of local control over the resource of desks and territory by, for example, putting a percentage of the desks that fell within their geographical area into 'maintenance'. This meant that those desks were not available on the corporate system to be booked by other people.

This action reduced the number of desks available for flexible booking, reducing the territory available for corporate use, and producing a more defined territorial boundary and team space. This behaviour became obvious (Shaw, 2013b) when there was an attempt in Operating Centre D to make better use of the floor space, and also to reduce the numbers of 'spare' desks that teams appeared to have. During this work Team Leaders would make representations via their 1\* leader in order to circumvent the process, and to make sure they got more seats than other Team Leaders:

*' You've got the hierarchy. The 1\*s want their team around them and I will give you an example at the moment. We have a 1\* who wanted a corner desk, so he was given a corner desk, but because of the way the floor-plate was designed, his team was sitting the other side of the corridor. We moved up here exactly a month ago, exactly four weeks ago, he had decided in the last week he doesn't like to be apart from his team, so they were taking two desks over the other side of the corridor so he can sit with his team. Now we're not even talking about people working from home*

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<sup>51</sup> Corsham.

*here, we're talking about the other side of a corridor. So you have the hierarchy that our 1\*s were still in the mind-set 'this was my team', I have to have them around us and then you have the need for teams to be together, you get the little huddles happening together and therefore, ....We're all security cleared, we all work for the common aim of being the outer office, but there's almost the need to keep a stamp on the area so I think the problems originate from the senior management and a need to keep their teams together, but it's perpetuated at team level' (Shaw, 2011).*

The above response is from a C2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre B and indicates a concept of *management by line of Sight*. *Management by line of sight* is a term that is used in DE&S to indicate that managers may only feel that they can manage effectively employees that they can see. If they cannot see them then the manager may feel that the employee is not working, and also that they are unable to manage them.

The deviation by staff members from the accepted use of the official desk-booking system produced several effects. For example, some staff felt as though they were not valued or wanted by DE&S or their team, or people were more difficult to find by staff walking onto a floor-plate, because they *usually sit there, but they aren't there today* (Shaw, 2014p). Because people might not be in their usual place this dislocation appeared to produce frictional costs through time wasted looking for people.<sup>52</sup>

There also appeared to be an emotional cost associated with this dislocation, because people were tired of constantly searching for people, so instead of face to face conversations, they resorted to email conversations or booking time with other people, thereby formalising what would be informal conversation and using more time to do it (Shaw, 2014j). DE&S did not appear to recognise these costs,

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<sup>52</sup> Talk to the board question 1405-003.

which appeared to increase the tension between the staff who had to hunt for desks, and those senior managers who did not. Thus, the socio-cultural and informal was being overwhelmed by the socio-technical, making what should have been a quick and easy interaction, difficult and long winded.

An additional effect was that instead of flexible working across the floor-plate producing more serendipitous conversations, it actually had the opposite effect, because when a stranger sat in a different group area, the conversations appeared to become more closed, with language being more guarded. (Shaw, 2013b).

*‘ When there was somebody who doesn’t work in your team in the area the conversations drop an octave and they’ll happen at the desk. If somebody’s [from outside] sitting in desk A, they’ll huddle around desk G, so that there’s that little gap between them’. (Shaw, 2011l).*

This change in language occurred because ‘the visitor’ might not be supposed to hear those conversations, because although they might be in the same Operating Centre, or a close Project Team, they were in a different group. Although this different group might not be competitors, they were still different and it appeared that they feared that the information that may have been overheard might be used to strengthen or weaken the home group’s position.

This change in conversation appears to indicate that people wanted to be in groups that they trusted and were familiar with. The groups therefore appeared to close ranks, to anyone who they did not know, even if the person in that seat might be from the same Operating Centre.

Therefore, the implementation of flexible-desking appeared to affect employees more negatively than positively, even though it was deemed to be a success for the corporate DE&S, because it meant that more people could be squeezed onto the floorplates, gaining greater efficiency.

There was another downside to the greater number of people on site, as the car parks were not sufficiently large to accommodate all of the staff. A car parking pass system was introduced that was based on how far away from Abbeywood the person lived, with people within a certain distance not being able to bring cars onto site unless there was a special reason:

*‘The parking issues and all those sorts of things, the poor guys who live within three miles who have to cycle to work, in this weather? But you know, the two ladies who are our clerks they wouldn’t dream of walking or cycling three miles to work, but yet they can’t have a car pass’* (Shaw, 2011w).

This response, from an RAF Squadron Leader, indicates that the military were well aware of the pressures on the civil servants on the site, even though they were not affected. It seems that military personnel may have been sympathetic to the civil servants who had to put up with these decisions on reducing desks and car parking spaces, and who did not get special privileges. Also that DE&S, was, with the introduction of car-park passes that discriminated by distance from the site, creating more boundaries between staff.

The trajectory of geographical identity, or territory marking, continued to the personal desk level, where identity could be marked either formally or informally. This was exacerbated by the DE&S policy of not allocating a permanent desk to a person unless they had a formal reason, or they were above 1\* rank.

The following response from a Naval Warrant Officer, while blunt, encapsulates both the intent and also the effect of exercising geographic identity:

*‘...it’s not quite pissing on your territory like a cat, but it serves the same purpose’* (Shaw, 2011h).

Informal territory marking was achieved by staff leaving their *frou frous*, sports clothing or personal effects on their desks this behaviour appeared to be predominantly exclusionary in nature. The following example makes explicit the

unsaid reason for marking territory in DE&S which was that it was for the protection of personal space. This example occurred in Operating Centre D and is shown in Photograph 4-16 demonstrating how furry toys, trolls, or other items were used to mark personal territory.



**Photograph 4-16 Desks and Frou Frous**

**Source Derek Shaw**

Also shown in the top left hand corner of is how the Director, an SCS 2\*, marked their territory, with an engineering cut-away missile, soft seats and book cases, chiming with Weir and the concept of the Diwan, Weir et al. (2010). This whole issue was captured by one informant who said:

*‘...When [ this person] was on leave or otherwise away from their desk on a longer term basis, these ‘frou frous were put away in a cupboard, but when they were there, the message was clear, ‘Bugger off, this is my space, leave it alone...’(Shaw, 2013r).*

It was also apparent at this point that there appeared to be a gender divide in personal territory marking. Female territory was more often marked by cuddly toys or cats, whereas male territory was more often marked by engineering models, or by sportswear being draped over the back of a seat (Shaw, 2013u). There was also the more unpleasant ‘dirty keyboard’ method of territory marking,



where a computer keyboard would be left un-cleaned, so that other people would not want to use it (Shaw, 2013u).

This personal territory marking behaviour appears to indicate that there was a tension between the socio-technical organisational rules of the DE&S corporate desk-booking and clear desk policy that staff were supposed to follow, and the socio-cultural norms of group behaviour and the human need for territory, which resulted in some staff circumventing those rules. The marking of personal territory may have become a cultural norm within those groups.<sup>53</sup> The fact that this socio-cultural behaviour was allowed to override the following of corporate processes is indicative of several things. Firstly, that the leaders of this group, could, if they wanted to, enforce the organisational rules, but in reality, they did not. They allowed the socio-cultural norm to prevail. Secondly, it shows the strength of the socio-cultural and how that can over-ride and subvert the socio-technical, leading to potential frictions between groups and group members. This tension was exacerbated by the implementation of a 'flexible-desk' policy.

#### **4.4.2 Protection of Territory**

**Finding: lack of desk space and inequitable treatment of staff could lead to super-competitive behaviours between staff over desks and also to a level of staff dis-engagement over not having a desk.**

It was observed that in three Operating Centres; C, D and F, the desk booking system, as a representation of geographic identity, had led to super competitive behaviours, also even occasionally to physical violence between people (Shaw, 2013l). These behaviours appeared to be caused by a socio-technical process conflicting with the socio-cultural and emotional needs of stability and territory.

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<sup>53</sup> It was noted in October 2014 that in the Directors 'State of the Nation presentation, that one slide concentrated on vox pops of staff member's view of the desk booking system and the behaviours that were associated with it. Those comments corroborated the findings of this research within that Operating Centre.

In Operating Centre C, civil service staff were expected to give up their desks to contractors. The following incidents were provided by a C1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre C:

*'No desk with my team in NH1 [Neighbourhood] so have a desk in NH2 [Neighbourhood] with what remains of [another Delivery Team]. [I am] thoroughly pissed off with the lack of desks and IT in our team.....so spent a really lovely day in the sunshine on the beach'* (Shaw, 2013l).

*'... Nearly saw evidence of violence on the floor-plate today!! I [the conversation initiator] swore and was going to belt a consultant for using two desks when one of our guys had no desk. Turned out to be one of our own military burks, (sic) a Major, who had moved onto our floor-plate and believes that his desks were sacrosanct!'* (Shaw, 2013l).

*'Ah the luxury of a regular desk. I have been told that I am too often absent from the floor-plate but no-one gives a [...] about civvies having desks as we have to give them up for the consultants! Working in a team had gone by the board as everyone had the consultancy attitude of 'looking after number one' even to the extent of unbooking a desk and not telling fellow team members that they were available...'. (Shaw, 2013l).*

The prioritisation of desks for contractors and consultants occurred because this particular team had explicitly stated as policy that it was easier for civil servants to find a desk on another floor-plate and that it was generally not acceptable to have contractors and consultants sitting amongst other teams.

As a result of this, and after some incidents in which staff left the building (Shaw, 2013l) when there was no desk available, staff in Operating Centre C were reminded that it was not acceptable for anyone to decide to take a day's leave or to refuse to work if no desk was available (Shaw, 2013l). This example from Operating Centre C was the third example of these super competitive behaviours that were witnessed by the researcher.

Super competitive behaviours were also observed in Operating Centre F. In one instance two civil servants appeared to have been able to book the same desk and an argument ensued, until one of the two was offered another desk (Shaw, 2014q). In Operating Centre D another incident was observed that was similar to that in Operating Centre F, where two people said that they had booked the same desk. In this instance while one person had occupied the desk, because they had arrived early and had started to work, but was temporarily away from it, the second person came in and switched off the computer, and had started to move the other person's possessions away from the desk when the first person came back (Shaw, 2014q)

If these behaviours were observed to have been happening in three Operating Centres in DE&S at that time, there may have been other, un-reported instances in other Operating Centres. In any case, conflicts like these over desks following the introduction of flexi-desking indicates an underlying tension between the socio-technical rules of DE&S, the needing to book a desk, and the socio-cultural. This tension appeared naturally to lead to understandable conflict.

In Operating Centre E, a Squadron Leader encapsulated the human effect of flexible desking from a military point of view:

*‘ It’s the desk sharing. The fact that I’m quite happy with desk sharing, it makes sense to me the system works, if everybody had to use it, but when you come in and the majority of the civil servants have all got their pictures up and their frou frous on their desk and they’ve booked their desk for eight weeks solid and then they don’t come in for two or three days without thinking to ring up and say ‘oh my desk was free’ or unbooking it before they go. Also there was one individual who it doesn’t matter who has booked his desk will come in early and sit at his desk and refuse to move and that’s allowed, the team leader was not gripping it. No you’re actually affecting people’s daily lives and why am I going to bother coming to work if I’m going to have the aggravation?’ (Shaw, 2011w).*

### **4.4.3 Summary**

Section 4.4 has shown some of the ways that personal, social and geographic identity are manifested in DE&S. These manifestations support the framework of group distinctiveness and the existence of hidden cultural and behavioural boundaries between groups. This in turn led to the retention of group cultures which appeared to work against the socio-technical cultural rules of DE&S.

## 4.5 Strength of Identity

### 4.5.1 Identity Axes in DE&S

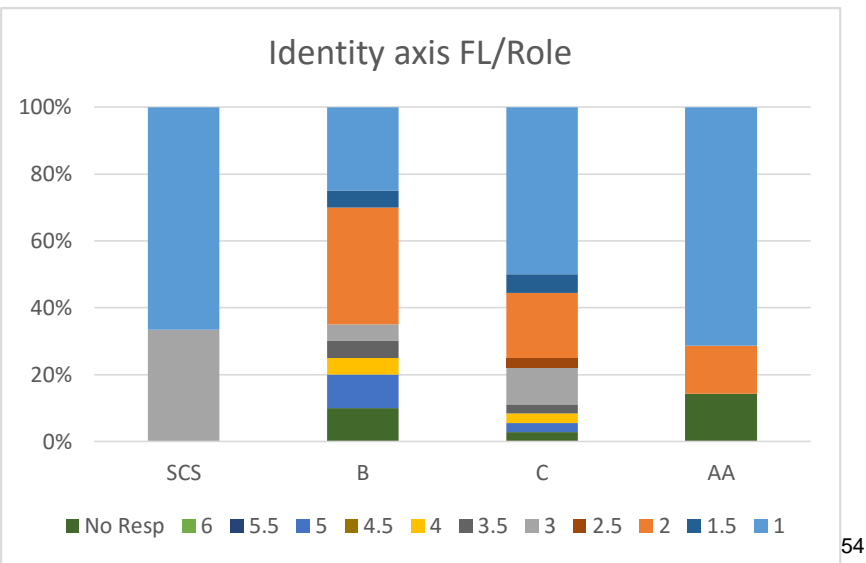
**Finding:** identity was expressed along two axes in DE&S, that of identifying with DE&S and also identifying with the concept of the Role Team and the front-line. Also even though there was no clear view of one identity being stronger than another across all grades, it appeared that the strength of identity with the front-line was stronger than was identification with DE&S.

Identity, its strength and manifestation, was one of the original themes of this thesis. Identity was investigated as a concept through the manifestation of personal, social, and geographic identity. Strength of identity was tested along two axes that were apparent in the vernacular speech of members of DE&S, one axis being the relationship between the group member and their Role Team and the 'front-line', and the other, the strength with which group members identified with DE&S.

Graph 4-1 shows the strength of identity as reported by respondents in relation to their commitment to their Role Team and the *front line*. Academically and pragmatically the Role Team and the *front line* are obviously separate constructs, but respondents in fact appear to view them as the same construct, but one that exists as two ends of a continuum, in other words the front –line appeared to be an extension of their identity in DE&S.

Therefore, the research measured the strength of identity of respondents to that joint concept. The grades are labelled as shown in Graph 4-1. Responses were ranked on a Likert scale of 1-6 (Bernard, 2006). On the scale that is used within these graphs, 1 indicates that the respondent identified very strongly, with the target concept and 6 indicates that they identified very weakly with the target concept.

There were 87 responses to this question from a total research population of 124. Numbers of each grade that took part were shown in Table 3-1.



**Graph 4-1 Strength of Identification by Grade with the Role Team and the Front Line**

Source Derek Shaw

**Legend :** Horizontal Axis denotes broader banded grade respondents.

SCS=Senior Civil Service, B=Grade 6 and 7 staff (B1 and B2), C=HEO and SEO grade staff (C1 and C2), AA=D and E grade staff. All bands include military equivalent grades.

Vertical axis denotes % response against Likert scale score

The light blue areas in Graph 4-1 correspond to 'strongly identify with' and are seen at the top of the bars. The strength of identity is represented on the scale with 1 being *strongly identify with*, and 6 being *weakly identify with* the target group, shown at the bottom of the bars.

<sup>54</sup> Statistical advice provided by Guy Robinson BSc, Maths, First Class Honours 2014.

### Explanation of Graph 4-1

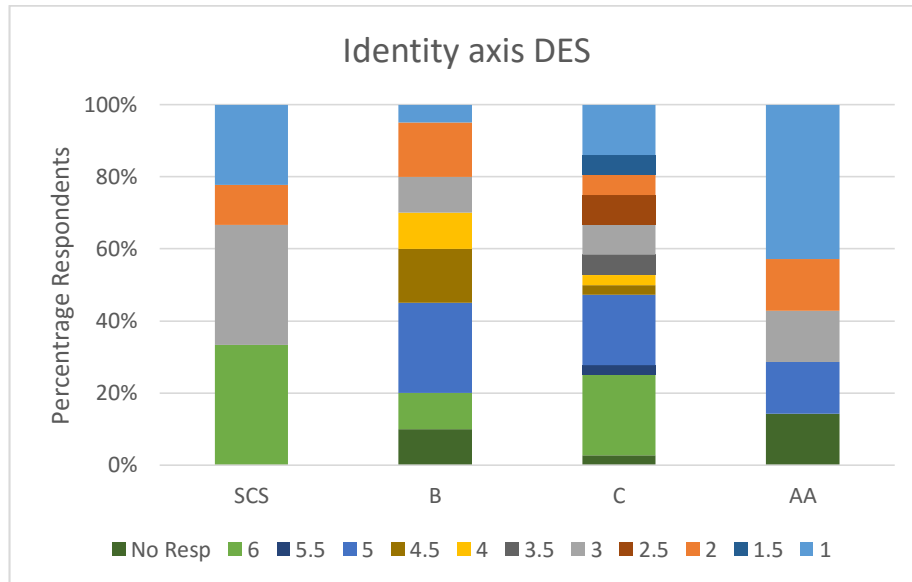
Graph 4-1 appears to show that there is broadly a strong agreement in the professed strength of identification of broader banded SCS and senior military staff with their role team and the front line. It also shows that B2 and B1 grade civil servants and military equivalents appeared to be ambivalent in their strength of identity in their responses. Whilst many at this grade identified very strongly with their role and the front line, more respondents were either neutral or negatively identified with their Role Team and or the *front line*. On the other hand it shows that C1 and C2 grade civil servants and their military equivalents appeared to be more likely to identify very strongly with their Role Team and/or the 'front line'.

This differentiation is even more clearly seen in the responses given by D and E grades, where there is little ambiguity. Of those that responded, the strongest identification to the Role Team and to the *front line*, corresponded to the civil service grades D and E,<sup>55</sup> and also to substantive 1\* to 2\*. Taking account of nil responses, these grades identified very strongly and consistently with their Role Teams and to the front line.

When asked the same question, but in relation to DE&S, the picture changes.

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<sup>55</sup> Administrative to Senior Executive Officer.



**Graph 4-2 Strength of Identification with DE&S**

Source: Derek Shaw

**Legend :** Horizontal Axis denotes broader banded grade respondents.

**SCS=Senior Civil Service, B=Grade 6 and 7 staff (B1 and B2), C=HEO and SEO grade staff (C1 and C2), AA=D and E grade staff. All bands include military equivalent grades.**

**Vertical axis denotes % response against Likert scale score.** The light blue areas in Graph 4-2 correspond to 'strongly identify with' and are seen at the top of the bars. The strength of identity is represented on the scale with 1 being *strongly identify with*, and 6 being *weakly identify with* the target group, shown at the bottom of the bars.

There were 87 responses to this question from a total research population of 124. Numbers of each grade that took part were shown in Table 3-1.



## Explanation of Graph 4-2

Graph 4-2 shows that the SCS and B2 and B1 grade respondents and military equivalents appeared to be more neutral or negative in their strength of identification with DE&S; C1 and C2 grade civil servants and military equivalents appeared to be strongly negative towards DE&S.

Grade D and E grade civil servants and military equivalents appeared to be evenly split between those who identified strongly with DE&S, those who were neutral and those who identified weakly, or negatively with DE&S. This finding, when placed alongside the findings of the high levels of identification with the Role Team, and the low levels of identification with DE&S, indicated that there was a hierarchy of identification that appeared aligned to group size. It appears that employees below B2 grade appeared to not identify as strongly with DE&S, which was the larger group, as they did with their Role Team, which was the smaller group. Also B2 and B1 grades and up to novice SCS 1\* staff appeared to be more ambivalent in their identification with DE&S and also with their Role Team. Some of the reasons for this split in the strength of identity appear to be illustrated through the following responses, firstly, a C1 civil servant:

*'Front line every time, MOD churns too regularly in my opinion for any person to identify with anything more than either the top table which doesn't tend to churn very much, or the front line. But the intermediate, the individual teams within DLO, DPA, DE&S they're changing all the time I don't identify with that very strongly at all'. (Shaw, 2011h).*

This delamination of identity between employees, stakeholders and DE&S might have occurred as a result of the pressures that were placed on staff at those grades. It might also have occurred because the employee was not comfortable moving into a stakeholder, functionally oriented role, and away from a task based role, for example: *'selling your soul as a C1 to PPM (Programme and Project Management), (Shaw, 2007-2010)* which appeared to be seen as negative,

whereas identifying primarily with *'the front line'* was seen to be very powerful and positive.

This was shown in the following example, where a higher degree of understanding and commitment to the *front line* was demonstrated than may have been otherwise expected:

*'...But I very much still view my desktop as an extension of the battlefield. You know, I can't be there in person, but I can influence and may be provide that bit of kit that helps them out'.* (Shaw, 2011g).

The reasoning behind this response appears to be quite clear, the respondent was a C1 civil servant, but was ex-British Army. At the time of the interview he was working in the team that supported the weapon that he had used when he was a serving soldier. He had been in Iraq, serving as a fires controller, and therefore he understood the question that he was being asked as a project manager of the equipment, and also he could put himself in the place and the mind-set of the frontline personnel who were asking for help. Identification with the front line for him was a given.

This respondent gives an insight into what is discussed in section 6.2 as the ethos within DE&S.

This ethos was also indicated within the nested identities that people possessed within DE&S and which appeared to be complementary, as opposed to being contradictory:

*'...do I distinguish between DE&S and MOD? I don't. I don't know if that's because my job occasionally takes me to main building, but also we are the cross-cutting part of the programme environment. I can't tell you that I identify with being a part of the DE&S; I'm a MOD, civil servant who happens to work within the DE&S and my identification with that [MOD] was actually very strong...'.* (Shaw, 2011l).

In terms of identification with a particular group in DE&S there appeared to be a hierarchy of identity and belonging to groups within a cultural framework that corresponds to Kirke's concept of the '*transferrable we*' (Kirke, 2007d). This occurred even if some military personnel only grudgingly acknowledged their belonging to civilian based groups in DE&S. It seems that they could also accept both identities as being pragmatic and non-contradictory. The following respondent was a young Royal Naval Lieutenant:

*'...That's difficult for civilian colleagues to understand as well, a friend and colleague was heavily criticised for being too loyal to the Royal Navy above DE&S which was always going to be the case. You're never going to get us away from that. In my mind, the two were not in conflict. If I'm here doing a job for DE&S which was of benefit to the Royal Navy there's no conflict in my mind of my loyalty lying with the Royal Navy'* (Shaw, 2011).

This linkage may be age, position, or personal-psychology related, because it appeared that within DE&S there was a more collaborative and less antagonistic view of group life among younger staff members than among old ones. These were predominantly in their mid-twenties to mid-thirties, and had not been in the DPA or the DLO for any length of time, or if military had been in at least one posting in a joint environment, such as PJHQ.<sup>56</sup> It appears then that belonging to a single culture, or of having multiple cultural identities, might not preclude group members from possessing nested identities that were non-contradictory.

Belonging to different groups appeared to be no obstacle to bridging the different cultures within DE&S, in that it appeared to be possible for military personnel to identify with civilian groups and vice versa. Military or ex-military personnel were the only ones to identify strongly or very strongly with the *front line*. Civil servants could also identify strongly with it as well. They could also identify with MOD, as

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<sup>56</sup> Permanent Joint Headquarters, Northwood.

opposed to DE&S or their Role Team, because they saw themselves as civil servants being there to serve whoever asked them.

*‘For MOD, I would identify myself as very strongly. For DE&S, I’m probably in the middle, because I’ve been with it from the start, and the role team, I identify less with’* (Shaw, 2011h).

The fact that some C1 grades and below appeared to explicitly identify more strongly with DE&S or MOD, may be related to the respondent’s functional role. For example, if a respondent, such as the above C2 civil servant performed a corporate role, that was an indication that they may have been more likely to identify both with their Role Team and DE&S or MOD, with that identification not acting as an exclusive or contradictory factor. But if a person, either military or civil service, did not have a DE&S corporate role they might identify less strongly with DE&S.

The existence of nested identities in relation to the front line and also to Role Teams within DE&S was confirmed by a Royal Navy Lieutenant. He identified with the Royal Navy and also with DE&S, and while in DE&S, had taken on the DE&S identity as a primary identity:

*‘...when I’m ever down in Portsmouth I’m...I don’t consider myself any part of Fleet, although I’m still Royal Navy, but I’m very much DE&S, so yes, reasonable. Not the strongest, but yes, quite high, but in the right environment, I don’t think of myself as DE&S sitting here doing my normal day job. Unless I’m on the phone actually, I mean I could be on the phone and it’ll switch. I mean I was having discussions yesterday with FOST [Flag Officer Sea Training] about an issue I wanted to sort out and I was very much, not defending, but taking the part of DE&S’* (Shaw, 2011o).

But this switching of identity appeared to only occur when speaking to the other group, and therefore the change in identity appeared occur in relation to that other group that he was also a member of:

*‘.. In terms of tribal behaviours within the department it comes down to who was one’s allegiance to? You see, because we’re not homogenous there can always be a doubt in one’s mind that if you were dealing with an Army officer or a civil servant or an RAF or Navy officer, and I guess those were the four tribes really that describe the department, we all like to think we’re joint. But there’s always a suspicion that one’s loyalty was not to one’s line manager or to one’s jointness but to one’s service’ (Shaw, 2012h).*

Also, as was shown in the following example, the Team Leader was a Royal Naval Reserve Captain:

*‘The team leader presented me [the researcher] with two business cards, one had Royal Navy insignia and his rank on it, and history, super nominal and decorations, the other was his civil service business card, and I asked him why two? He replied, ‘Literally so that sometimes it gets you a place at the table. You’ll often see that you’ll be placed in various places depending upon what your perceived industry rank is’ (Shaw, 2010a).*

So here we see that identity and loyalty could vary during the day, and that identity and loyalty may not necessarily be the same thing. So who does one’s loyalty belong to: the Service? Or to DE&S? It appears that it could actually be both, and the identities could be used as was contextually appropriate. The ability to possess this multiplicity of identities, and to preference them as appropriate was a theme which transcended grade, service, and Operating Centre. This then appears to make one group more important than another at a particular point in time, or situation. Loyalty then appeared to co-exist with the fracturing of identities and flowed along organisational boundaries, between the civilian and the military cultures. It appears also that identity, as well as having a link to loyalty, also has a link to power, perceived power and influence. The difference in the strength of identification with Naval groups across grades is further illustrated by the following example from a Naval 1\* Officer:

*'I am DE&S, but who do I serve? Well actually I serve my customer, but I belong to DE&S. And I think you can have both' (Shaw, 2011q).*

This respondent described dual identities and what they meant to him. It shows that he, at his grade, was able to identify equally easily with both DE&S and the Royal Navy, that there was no contradiction in his identification with the groups, DE&S and the Royal Navy.

It also appeared to be recognized within DE&S, that within any military domain, civil servants could be brought into the broader military grouping. This was because *'if you work with us in any way you become one of us'*.

This attitude appeared to be consistent across services, and this factor of identification and assimilation was also identified by Kirke (2012) in the wider MOD, in relation to the RAF and civil servants who worked in the RAF domain. This sentiment was confirmed by a Naval 1\*, from Operating Centre B:

*' Naval service was civil servants and serving, and there's an interesting debate to be had about what constitutes a Naval service person as opposed to a civil servant. When was he a Naval service civil servant, when was he not?' (Shaw, 2011o).*

Therefore it appears that civil servants were thought to be service agnostic, implying a separateness from the military. The following is from a Royal Naval 1\*:

*'Do I see the Civil Service as a fourth service? No, I see it as Land, Sea and Air and if you're a civil servant in a team you'll be one of those. I personally don't see the civil service as the fourth service. I see the Civil Service as serving all. And you align with whoever you're working with for at that time' (Shaw, 2011q).*

This adds weight to the view that appeared to be held by many, especially military personnel, that there was no Civil Service identity or that it was nebulous, being

*‘the semi-amorphous mass in the middle of the supporting groups’* (Shaw, 2011q). As described previously, strength of identity appeared to also be linked to group size, a Role Team was smaller than an Operating Centre.

The research shows that group members could maintain multiple and non-contradictory identities, apparently, because of the difference in the strength of identity that was shown towards each of the memberships. The respondents appeared to be broadly consistent, in that if below B2 grade, they might not recognize their Operating Centre (2\* organisation) as strongly as either the front-line, their customer, or their Role Team.

Role Teams and ‘the front-line’ were small groups, because people worked in small teams and supplied equipment directly to a small group of people, even though that small group of people were part of a larger organisational construct, and DE&S was a large bureaucracy that people were part of, and of which they could see themselves as being a small part.

There was also a split in identification between grades which may have produced tensions within groups. This also indicates that it would lead to tensions between groups, as well as within them, particularly for a large group. For example if large groups, such as DE&S, asked a smaller group, such as a Project Team to do something that they did not want to do, such as reduce the number of desks that they used, or to use the corporate system rather than a local system to book desks. This might result in the smaller group resisting the demands of the larger group, thus going against corporate behaviour.

This thesis has used the concept of identity as one of the lenses through which organisational culture has been investigated. It may be the case that the concept of identity is confused and concatenated with the construct of a person’s commitment to a group or an idea. Identity and ‘identification with’ differ from ‘commitment to’, in that, as was shown in Graphs 4-1 and 4-2 indicated that B grade staff and some SCS appeared to show a degree of ambivalence in their

identification with either DE&S, their role teams, to the front-line and also to the management of the bureaucracy of DE&S.

As Kirke (2012) identified in MOD, staff at that level were likely to be looking up to the corporate, rather than the project levels of DE&S for their next promotion. This commitment could be shown as creating a tension between the bureaucracy and the project effort. This tension may manifest itself as preferencing corporate behaviour over project team behaviour, through the para-social relationship, when that behaviour may be inappropriate, such as is shown in the following response from a 1\* the British Army:

*‘DHR (Director, Human Resources) came over to bollock the 1\* in the team. The reason? They were late responding to one of his corporate returns, and the reason for that was that they were dealing with an incident in Afghanistan on the front-line’ (Shaw, 2011f).*



#### 4.5.2 Identity Acceptance and Rejection at the Merger.

**Finding:** At the inception of DE&S many people openly rejected the imposition of the DE&S identity, but were still committed to servicing ‘the front line’.

One of the consequences of the imposition, rather than the negotiated agreement of the change of identity from the DPA or the DLO to DE&S, was that many people initially and openly rejected that forced change of identity. This was a recurring theme throughout the research, both within the interviews but also within the vernacular existing in DE&S at that time.

For several years after the merger of the DPA and the DLO, a common theme that was articulated by interviewees was: *‘DE&S joined me, I didn’t join it’*. (Shaw, 2011q).

The following illustrations give other examples of this theme, spanning grades from C2 to SCS 1\*. The first example was provided by an SCS 1\* in operating Centre B:

*‘...What did I know about DE&S before I joined it? Well it didn’t exist before I joined it because I was part of the merger. What did I know about the merger ahead of the merger? I’d say I didn’t pay it too much interest to be perfectly honest with you. So completely devoid of all the politics and all the rumour’* (Shaw, 2011r).

And a Royal Naval Captain in Operating Centre G:

*‘I didn’t join, DE&S joined me. They took me over. Because we started off, if you go back prior to DLO there was WSA (Warship Support Agency), prior to WSA there was NBSA (Naval Base Support Agency), prior to that we belonged to another section and we’ve outlasted all of these various entities that have tried to control us.’* (Shaw, 2011v).

A civilian C2 in Operating Centre E:

*‘...Things that had been briefed but you know, the square root of nothing really...It was a fit for purpose thing wasn’t it? [DE&S was the] same as the DPA really, I didn’t join the DPA [at that time], it joined me’. (Shaw, 2011m).*

One of the effects of the imposition by DE&S of a single DE&S identity and the partial rejection of that identity by Operating Centres and Project Team members was the enhanced fragmentation of identity, both of individuals and also of groups in DE&S.

At the time of the merger this rejection appeared to occur because of a combination of group members’ and also team leaders’ resistance to the new identity and also to the change itself.

The resistance to the change of identity appeared also to be linked to the team leader’s perceived loss of power and prestige at that time, because of the imposition of Operating Centres and the removal of the Integrated Project Team.

The Integrated Project Team (IPT) was a construct from the DPA. These teams were responsible for the delivery and management of a project, which might be, for instance, a tank, a ship, or food supplies. IPTs comprised Role Teams that were responsible for one specific element of the overall project. As a result of the merger of the DPA and DLO it was decided that the team structures were to be changed, to move away from the IPT structures to Operating Centres and domains in an effort to remove the boundaries between teams, and to introduce a more collaborative and ‘through life’ approach to equipment acquisition and maintenance.

Many of the IPT leaders who had been in the DPA did not like this change because they felt that they had lost power and prestige. This resulted in cynicism and resistance to change which acted to inhibit the ability of DE&S to create a

single corporate DE&S, because group members did not like being forced to take on a new identity that they did not wholly agree with. (Shaw, 2010-2014).

One of the outcomes of this disassociation and cynicism was that some staff apparently appeared actively to dis-identify with DE&S, preferring to carry on with their day job while at the same time, accessing one or more referential identities, thus allowing the organisational changes to happen around them, rather than to them:

*'He had been in that chair for over ten years, doing the same job, with the same phone number, talking to the same people. He had seen four changes of logo and stationery and lanyard, but his job had not changed, he just got on with it'* (Shaw, 2013e).

There then appears to be a common theme, which was that the new DE&S identity was viewed as being imposed and not chosen. This feeling was also reflected in the perceived lack of communication that came with the imposition of the new identity and the implementation of the merger. The feeling of the imposition of, rather than agreement with the new DE&S identity was also observed in terms of symbols of identity, as described in section 4.3.

### **4.5.3 Summary**

Section 4.5 has shown that identity in DE&S was expressed as a factor of meaningfulness in relation to among other things: identity group, group-size, and place within the hierarchy and also of role function.

Identity, therefore, formed one element of group distinctiveness in DE&S, enabling group members to create in-groups and out-groups, as a result of naturally occurring and organisationally legitimised social categorisation. In terms of who, or what, different people identified with, it was apparent in DE&S that when group members were asked which team, or who they identified with, that identity was expressed along two axes in DE&S, that of identifying with DE&S and identifying with their Role Team and jointly with the front-line.

Also even though there was apparently no clear view of one identity being stronger than another across all grades, it appeared that the strength of identity with the front-line was stronger than was identification with DE&S. This indicates that at that time, the concept of the One DE&S identity may have not been accepted by all group members, and that there appeared to be an ethos in DE&S whereby employees were there to support the 'front line' with the existence of DE&S appearing to be a necessary evil. Additionally, group members were apparently able to identify with different groups concurrently and with differing strengths of attachment. This finding indicates that these group members possessed multiple identities, as described in another context by (Kirke, 2004). The research indicates that the identities that were found in DE&S were not necessarily contradictory, but could be complementary.

## **4.6 Group size**

### **4.6.1 Introduction**

This thesis has so far presented data on group attributes that were found in DE&S. One of those factors is group size. Section 4.6 will show that the functional and social group sizes that were found in DE&S were consistent in size throughout the hierarchy and followed a consistent pattern within that hierarchy.

Socio-cultural attitudes and the relationship of group members to their groups were illustrated through narrative responses that were given by informants about the sizes of the groups that they inhabited.

Group size in DE&S and its effect on group behaviours was addressed through the socio-technical, organisationally legitimised and designed teams. This discovery was assisted by organisationally available and validated data on group and team design.

Section 4.6 reports the data as two strands in order to show the effect of group size on group behaviour in DE&S.

Strand one presents data on group size in DE&S from a subjective, respondent based point of view.

Strand two presents group sizes that were legitimised as teams through the DE&S organisational design process. It achieves this by using DE&S corporately validated data to provide indicative results on group size and the hierarchical nature of DE&S.

## 4.6.2 Strand One - Group Members Narrative of Group Size

### 4.6.2.1 Teams and Groups Differ in Size

**Finding: Team members were able to recognize the size at which a team stopped being a team and became a group.**

There was observed to be a boundary at which a team became too large to be a team, as the first comment from a Royal Naval Reserve Captain in Operating Centre F, illustrates:

*‘... The team can only get so big, to the point at which it becomes disparate and it’s no longer a team and you get sub-teams and I suspect in your detailed studies you’ll determine the optimum size for a team before it becomes meaningless because it’s too disjointed...’ (Shaw, 2011v).*

The following from an SCS 2\* serves to introduce how language described group size in DE&S, and also how group members related to their groups.

*‘...That’s one of 13,000 [Naval Constructors] but that’s an incredibly weak tribe, an incredibly weak tribe, we think there’s about 13,000 members,’ (Shaw, 2012h).*

Teams become groups when they become too large, they are then likely to comprise sub-groups, which had a specific purpose and were called ‘Role Teams’:

*‘...There’s a team within a team issue as well, which kind of had to work sometimes and then how you meld the team within the team into the bigger working team. I’ve never really seen the best way of doing that for a big team where you’ve got about 30 to 40 people. You get people bleating about the fact were we one team or four teams and back comes the cry, who cares?! Let’s work out what the whole big team vision was, we are working towards a unified goal in whatever groups that we’re in’ (Shaw, 2011o).*

The previous example from a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A indicates a group size, and also the fact that at that size of group any tensions between the teams must be managed to ensure that all of the teams, or sub-groups are working towards the superordinate goal of the group. A team also appears to possess a characteristic of *identity*, which, as described by a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A is not gained by being within a large group:

*'What is a team? A team isn't a 30,000 strong organisation; you can't possibly be a team. You have to have a team around you which you identify with and go forward'* (Shaw, 2011p).

Informants appear to consider that there is an optimum group size for effective team working. This appears to chime with the work of Bradner and others who have previously identified that the optimum size for a team is dependent on the function and work that the team is being asked to carry out, see Bradner et al. (2005), Cohen and Bailey (1997), Curral et al. (2001), Fried (1991), Hackman (1987), Hoegl (2005), and Pendharkar and Rodger (2009). It also a further indication of a boundary between what are called teams, and groups, because groups appeared to be larger than teams.

Whilst in DE&S there appeared to be no explicit optimal team size. Respondents indicated that Role Team sizes in DE&S appeared to be consistently composed of around 7 people, but within the overall concept of the 'team' in DE&S, these organisationally legitimated groups, that were called teams, could range in size from five in number to approximately 120 people:

*'...There were 5 left...'* (Shaw, 2011j).

*'...The team was 17 it's now 7...'* (Shaw, 2011j).

*'...We had the whole team sat down, that's about 30 people...'* (Shaw, 2011j).

*‘... we were a team of 25 people of which we have a 1\*, 8, B1s, (B1 grade) the rest were B2s (B2 grade, apart from 3 possibly 4 Cs (C2/C1) and the EA (Executive Assistant)...’ (Shaw, 2011l).*

The concept of a team in DE&S therefore covered a large range, from five people to the larger Project Teams that consisted of sub-groups, called Role Teams. The sizes of some of these sub-groups are presented in section 4.6.3. The larger Project Teams could be up to 120 people in size, which was caveated by at least one respondent as being the maximum group size that was manageable before the group fractured.

*‘...I worked in a UOR [Urgent Operational Requirements] IPT (Integrated Project Team), it was about 120 people, when it got over that number, it kind of broke up and became unmanageable’ (Shaw, 2012i).*

This last comment, which was both unguarded and un-solicited indicates that there may be a link to a group size factor that makes group more difficult to manage the larger they become. That link is discussed in section 4.6.7.

The group sizes that were indicated by respondents’ examples were consistent across a range of Operating Centres and are presented in section 4.6.4.

Sections 4.6.2 and 4.6.2.1 have presented examples of formal and informal group sizes and characteristics as described by respondents. Strand two now presents examples of organisationally legitimised group sizes that were observed within DE&S.



### **4.6.3 Strand Two - Organisationally Designed and Legitimised Groups**

#### **4.6.4 Introduction**

DE&S was a hierarchical organisation which comprised at the highest level: 4\*, then down through 3\*, 2\* then 1\* level groups at the SCS, or star grades, in military terms Rank.<sup>57</sup>

DE&S corporate data was derived from MOD open source statistics (MOD, 2011) also provides a breakdown of group sizes at SCS 1\* level and 2\* level across DE&S.

Detailed group size data were gathered from a 1\* led policy group that at the time of the research was in Operating Centre B; the sizes of groups and the 2\* Operating Centre, E, and a 2\* group that was Operating Centre D.

Functional group sizes were measured from the smallest size of group, the Role Team, which was characterised as a minimum of three members and which was led at a C1 level, up to the largest group size, the Operating Centre, which comprised up to 2500 members. Pairs or single workers were deemed not to be teams in the traditional sense.<sup>58</sup>

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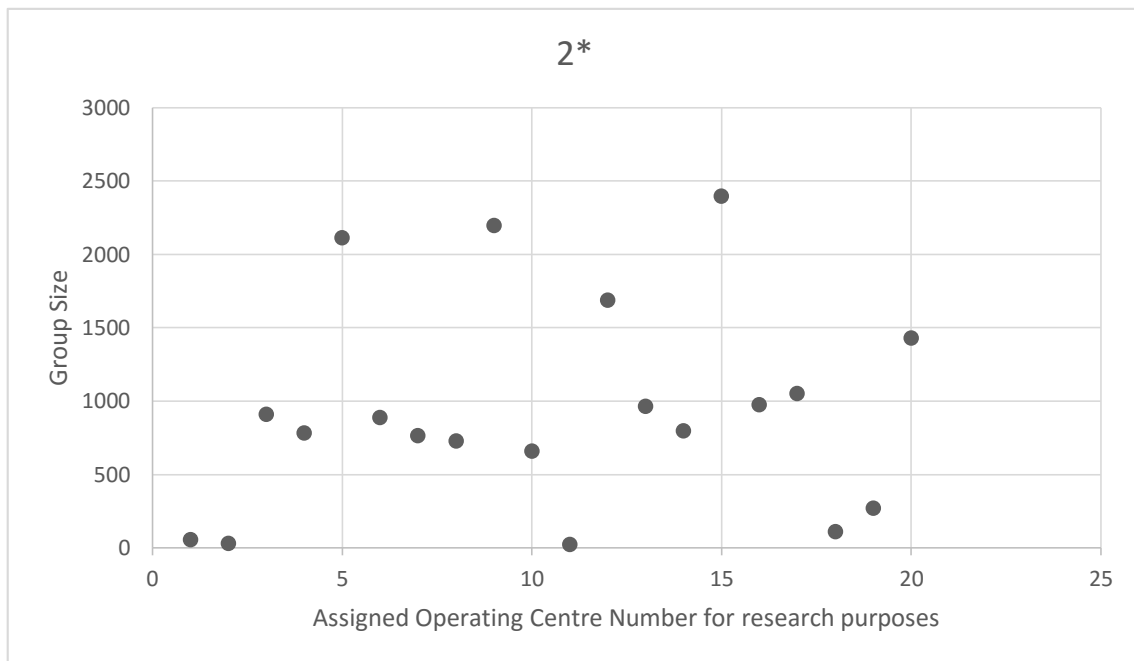
<sup>57</sup> Senior Civil Service or Military Star grades.

<sup>58</sup> Statistical and presentation advice for the data that are presented in this section was provided by Guy Robinson. BSc, first class, Mathematics, UCL 2014.

#### 4.6.5 Team and Group Sizes

**Organisationally Designed Group Sizes Were Consistent at each Level of the DE&S Hierarchy.**

**Finding: 2\* organisationally designed stable group sizes (Operating Centres) were consistent within the hierarchy of DE&S, being between 500 and 2500 members.**



Graph 4-3, 2\* Operating Centre Sizes in DE&S

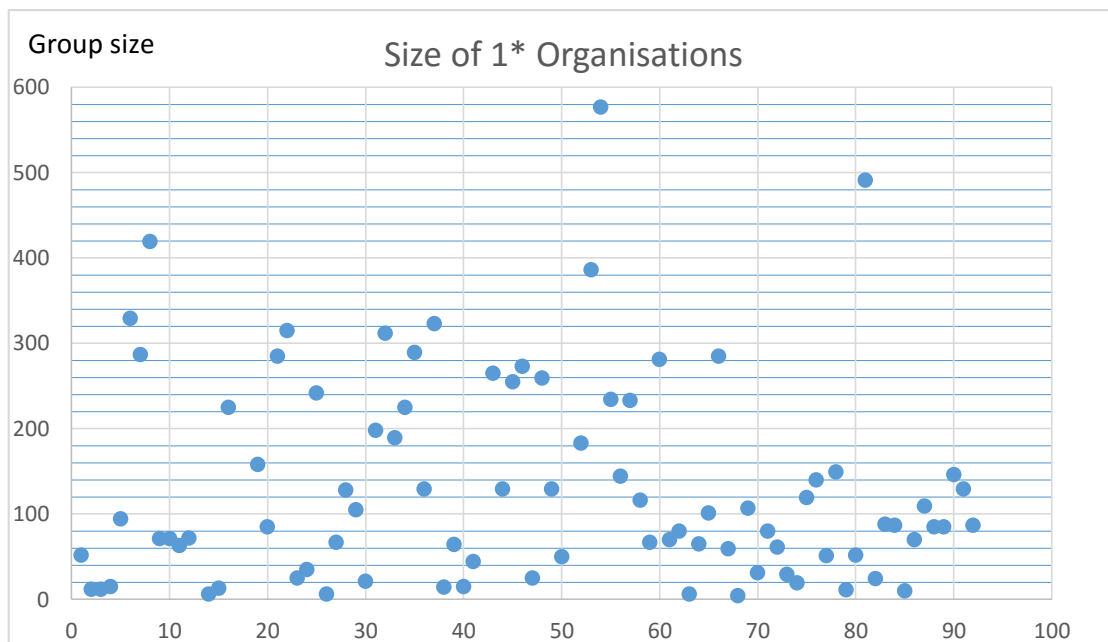
Source: The Stationery Office (2012b).

**Legend: Vertical axis shows group size.**

**Horizontal axis shows group by research reference number**

Graph 4-3 shows that the predominant pattern of stable, established Operating Centre sizes in DE&S was between 500 and 2500 members, with the majority falling between 500 and 1500 members. The group size range of Operating Centres appears to be very variable, from 3 to approximately 2500 members, there were no groups that had more than 2500 members. 2\* led groups that fell below 500 were either small specialist groups, or were new groups that were forming and at their full operating capability. These outliers to the pattern of groups can be explained as being new groups or special groups that were not sized as Operating Centres, but were sized as special Project Teams and led by a civilian SCS 2\* or military equivalent. They were labelled Operating Centres as they were led by an SCS 2\* director or military equivalent grade. It appears then, that there was a level of consistency in the design and implementation of an Operating Centre, because most of the Operating Centres in DE&S were between 500 and 2500 members strong.

**Finding: 1\* organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of DE&S.**



**Graph 4-4 DE&S SCS 1\* Organisational size**

Source: The Stationery Office (2012b).

**Legend:**

**Vertical axis shows group size**

**Horizontal axis shows group by research reference number**

Graph 4-4 shows the sizes of the 1\* organisations in DE&S. It shows that there was a significant clustering pattern of 1\* group sizes in DE&S: 28% of 1\* groups had 50-80 members, 11% had 120-180 members, 10% had 200-280 members, with outliers at above 550 members. The median group size was 128 members, with the average at 171 members. Groups that differed from this number of  $150 \pm 30$ , if they were larger, were either distributed groups with members not based at Abbeywood, or if smaller they were specialist project teams with a specific, often lived remit, or teams that were being built and were not at a stable

size. The prevalence of 1\* group sizes below 120 members is highly suggestive of a maximum manageable group size of 120 members.

This group size may also have been influenced by latency of organisational design because of the size of an Integrated Project Team in the DPA had been approximately 150 members. There then again appears to be a degree of consistency in the organisationally designed 1\* size groups, although the consistency was less clear than was apparent in the sizes of Operating Centres.

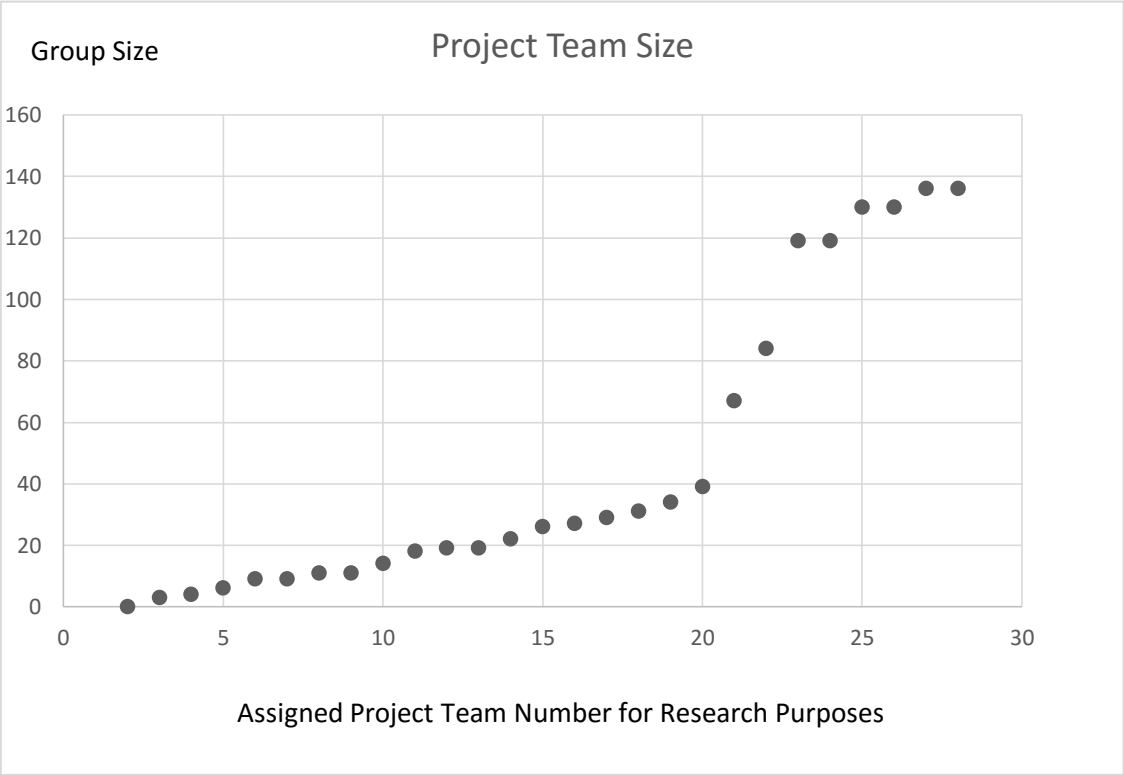
Graph 4-5 and Graph 4-6 will now show the patterning of group sizes in detail in Operating Centre D.<sup>59</sup> This was the only Operating Centre where the researcher was allowed full access to all organisational group size data. These data show all members of groups within the Operating Centre.

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<sup>59</sup> Data gained from Operating Centre D Organisational Charts 2012

**Finding: B1 grade organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of Operating Centre D in DE&S.**

Source: Derek Shaw



**Graph 4-5 Project Team Sizes in Operating Centre D**

Legend: Vertical axis shows group size

Horizontal axis shows group by assigned reference number

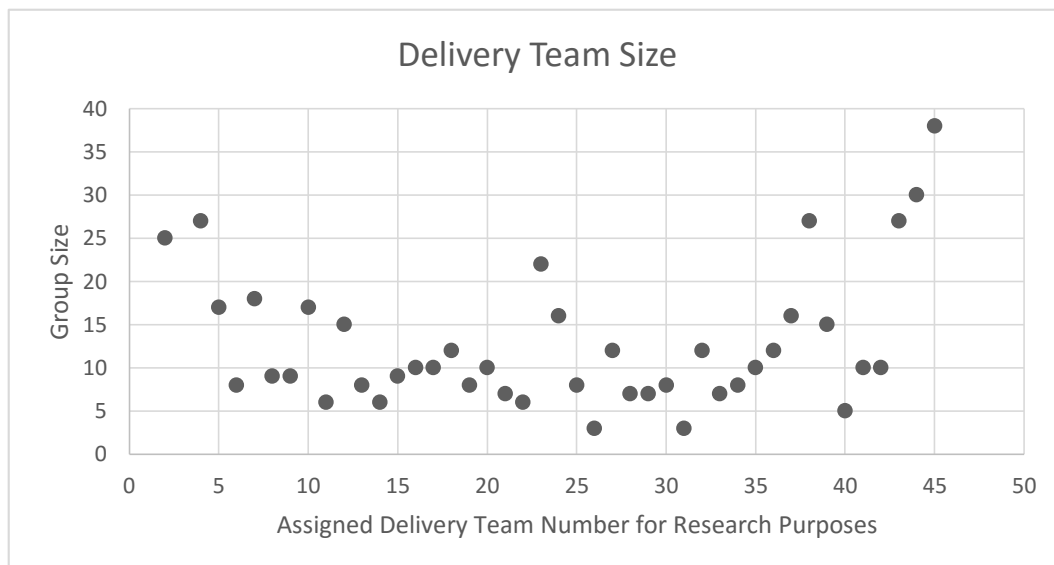
Graph 4-5 shows the patterning and clustering of Project Teams<sup>60</sup>, in Operating Centre D. This pattern shows a predominant linear distribution up to 40 group members. That progression appears to be based on a group size of 5 members. There appear to be two groups with between 65 and 85 members and there were no groups with 100 members. A significant pattern is the six groups that comprise 120 to 140 members. That number falls well within the 150±30 boundary, and

<sup>60</sup> Led by a Project Team Leader of B1 grade or military equivalent.

also corresponds to the narrative data that indicated that groups that have more than 120 members become more difficult to manage, the number of 120 members thus appears to be a self-limiting boundary. Within Operating Centre D, there were no groups that had more than 150 members.

What is not clear is why there are so many teams that had fewer than 40 members. It was during this period of the research that the Operating Centre was under resourced and so that may have affected the group sizes, as these teams may have been smaller than they needed to be.

**Finding: B2 grade organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of DE&S.**



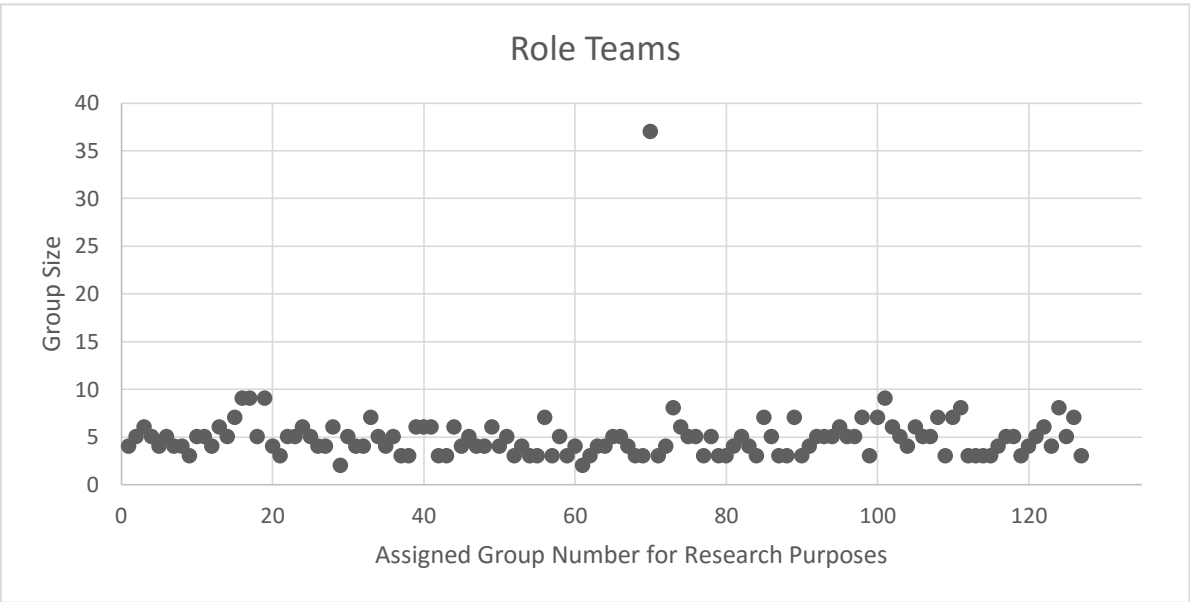
**Graph 4-6 Delivery Team Sizes in Operating Centre D**

Source: Derek Shaw

Graph 4-6 shows the pattern of Delivery Teams that were led by B2 grade members of staff in Operating Centre D. The number shows that there is significant clustering at group sizes of between 5-15 members and a separate pattern between 20-35 member teams. The key pattern in Graph 4-6 appears to be the linear distribution of five members, as also appeared in the data shown in

Graph 4-5. Outliers to the patterns, if below five members, can again be explained as being either special project teams, or singleton posts that were grouped together to account for the management of waifs and strays,(Shaw, 2013i) or new teams that were not staffed up to full strength. Graph 4-6 also appears to show a pattern of groups whose size ranges between 5-11 members.

**Finding: C1 grade organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within one Operating Centre in DE&S.**



**Graph 4-7 C1 (Role Team) Sizes in Operating Centre D**

Source: Derek Shaw

Graph 4-7 shows the pattern of Role Teams in Operating Centre D. With the caveat that a team starts at a group size minimum of 3 members, the predominant role team size range is between 3 and 15 members, with the majority of teams at this being in the range of 5-8 members.



Source	Size Range <sup>61</sup>	Team Type
Operating Centre B, group A	5-7 <sup>62</sup>	Work Team
Operating Centre D Pillar A 1*	Role Team 5-9	Work Teams
Operating Centre D Pillar B 1*	Role Team 5-8	Work Teams
Operating Centre E 1* group	Role Team 5-16	Work Teams

**Table 4-1 Comparison between Role Teams in Operating Centres B, D & E.**

Source: Derek Shaw

By comparing the available data from other Operating Centres it appears that there is a level of consistency in the design and implementation of Role Team sizes across a sample of DE&S Operating Centres. Role Teams within the available data all appear to fall between a five and 16 member boundary.

The smallest group size of 5±2 was also prevalent across DE&S for Top Teams. Chief of Materiel Land held a monthly meeting with the people who reported directly to him, four in number, all of whom were SCS 2\* Directors or rank equivalents, (Shaw, 2012k) thus giving a Top Team of 5 members.

This Top Team structure was replicated in Operating Centre D, with the 2\* Director having four, 1\* directors who reported directly to him, and further down the hierarchy of this Operating Centre B1 grade team leaders having five members of staff who reported directly to them (Shaw, 2013-2014). These sizes of Top Teams are consistent with other literature, such as Amason and Sapienza (1997), Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993). This then raises the question 'is the consistency of Top Team size across organisations a function of conscious

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<sup>62</sup> Does not include Team Leader

organisational design, subject to unconscious bias'? Section 4.6.7 attempts to shed light on that question.

#### **4.6.6 Discussion of Group Size Data**

Section 4.6 has presented data that shows consistent patterns of formal group sizes within DE&S. Section 4.6.6 now presents a discussion of that data and asks two questions: one, how similar are the group sizes that were found in DE&S to groups and teams in other hierarchical or project based organisations, and two, what might be the underlying explanations for the consistency in group and team sizes that were found?

##### **Consistency of organisational group sizes in literature**

The consistency of patterns that appeared to be within the team and group sizes in DE&S warrants an initial discussion. That discussion covers two areas, firstly the similarity of team and groups sizes in DE&S in comparison with team and group sizes that have been found in other organisations, and secondly possible explanations of what appears to be a consistency of team and group sizes throughout documented and also DE&S team and group sizes. In relating this thesis to that literature, the formal group sizes that were identified within DE&S as we have seen, fell into a broadly consistent pattern of  $5 \pm 2$ ,  $15 \pm 3$ ,  $45 \pm 9$ ,  $150 \pm 30$  or as the data has shown  $135 \pm 15$  as discrete teams, and between 500 and 2500 as Operating Centres.

By looking at literature it appears that Hoegl (2005), discovered teams comprised between 3-6 people, a number that closely matches the number of  $5 \pm 2$ , provided in DE&S for a role team. Also Staats et al. (2012), presented in Table 2-1 of this thesis, identified that teams in their research were sized at between 2-4 members, once again matching closely the number of  $5 \pm 2$  of a role team in DE&S, separately Curral et al. (2001) identified that teams had an average of 5 members.

Campion et al. (1993) presented in Table 2-1 of this thesis, indicate team sizes that average 15 members, that number closely matches a group size that was found in DE&S of  $15\pm3$  members. Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993) found that teams had an average of 13.39 members, once again similar to the  $15\pm3$  team size that was found in DE&S. Kirkman and Rosen (1999) data aligns with that of Haleblan and Finkelstein, providing a range of team sizes between 11.4 and 15.3 members, once again matching the data from within DE&S of  $15\pm3$  members within a B2 led team.

It thus appears that the concept label of a team is a rather flexible label that can be used to bound a group size of between 3 and 50 members. This broad range makes the definition of an ideal team size difficult to define. But it also appears that a team in DE&S is certainly no larger than 120-150 members, and probably a lot smaller, even if organisational jargon and team-building would have us think that a large organisation is 'one big family' or 'team-defence'.

Hackman (1987) suggests that team size in organisations is task driven, while Hoegl (2005 p 211) differs slightly and suggests that team size relates to both the size and complexity of the task and the skills that are required to complete the task. Whilst completely logical, that explanation of work design still leaves a question, which is why do the team and group sizes appear to be so consistent across different types of organisations? This thesis now looks to answer that question through the use of evolutionary anthropology and evolutionary psychology and their findings on evolved group sizes.

#### **4.6.7 Potential Explanations for Consistent Group Sizes in DE&S.**

The application of evolutionary psychology to this thesis was discussed in Chapter 2. To recap, the element of evolutionary psychology that appears relevant to the explanation of the consistency of formal group sizes in DE&S is the theory proposed by Dunbar, who finds that human communities and egocentric networks have a distinct size that is a result of neo-cortex volume and evolution (1993b). This what Dunbar calls the social brain hypothesis (2007).

Dunbar also proposes that as a result of evolution, groups and human networks scale consistently at a factor of between 3 and 4, and are layered and hierarchical and geometrically sized 2,3,5,15,45-50, up to maximum cognitive boundary of 150, see Dunbar (1998), Hill and Dunbar (2003 p 63). Dunbar shows that this group size hierarchy is consistent across a wide range of archaic groups, hunter gatherer groups, religious communities, and also armies from history to modern times, see Dunbar (2003 Figure 1), Hill et al. (2008), and Zhou et al. (2005).

The data that were gathered in DE&S indicate that the patterns within the group sizes that were found in DE&S appear to closely match those proposed by Dunbar. For example, in Operating Centre D, the group size shown in Graph 4-5 Project Team Sizes in Operating Centre D, indicates a linear pattern up to group sizes of 40, with the break points being at groups of 5 members, with the key pattern appearing between 120 and 140 members, thus matching Dunbar's cognitive maximum for a group and also the base pattern of five members.

Team size coupled with team effectiveness have provided fertile ground for researchers, but within the literature there is no consistency as to what size of team is the most effective, for example, Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993) and also Hoegl (2005) indicate that smaller teams are more effective than are larger ones, but that size as a factor of effectiveness is itself dependent on the task that the team are carrying out.

As we have seen, the larger groups in DE&S tended to be between 500 to 2500 group members.

It is especially interesting to note that anecdotally, when groups grew to larger than 120 members they became unmanageable, and these group sizes appeared to be comparable with Dunbar's concept of the clan (Dunbar, 1993a p 685), and also close to the cognitive maximum group size of 150 members that Dunbar describes Dunbar (1993a p 686).

Because of the similarity and also the consistency of the team sizes in DE&S compared to other organisations, it may perhaps be the case that organisational design was an explicit factor in DE&S group sizes, but one that was also influenced by evolutionary factors and therefore subject to cognitive bias. This indicates that evolutionary factors may have influenced the organisational culture of DE&S, through in this case group size.

Sections 4.5 - 4.6 have described the contributory factors of identity and group size that were identified as affecting group behaviour within DE&S. Section 4.7 will show that multiple linguistic frameworks and organisational dialects existed in DE&S.

## 4.7 Linguistic Frameworks, Organisational Dialects and Metaphors

### 4.7.1 Introduction

Section 4.5 reports the findings on the linguistic frameworks that were discovered in DE&S.

### 4.7.2 Linguistic Difference

**Finding: Operating Centres and Project Teams in DE&S possessed their own language, as dialects which could act as a barrier between the group and the outsider, but which also could reinforce in groups.**



**Cartoon 4-1 Jargon as Group Distinctiveness**

Source: MOD Crown Copyright

Cartoon 4-1 shows how linguistic difference, as jargon, was viewed in the vernacular humour. In this case the difference was between technical language and plain English. This shows that the linguistic divide was recognised within the wider MOD as something that could be the subject to humour.

There were other linguistic boundaries that also appeared to have the effect of creating in-groups and out-groups.

Each functional group developed and possessed its own lexicon which over time became a dialect within the hierarchy of DE&S languages. These linguistic factors appeared to combine to amplify the group distinctiveness quotient that existed between groups, but language could also serve to reinforce group cohesion within the linguistic boundaries of the group. Linguistic differentiation between functional groups could take many forms, from functional language, through to slang, thus returning the discussion to a socio-technical and socio-cultural axis.

Technical dialects were partly prescribed through the Acquisition Operating Framework (AOF),<sup>63</sup> which was a mechanism that described socio-technical, formal rules as processes within DE&S (MOD, 2015c). Examples of these technical dialects were included in, for example, the written finance lexicon, when describing Official Hospitality (MOD, 2013a), while the functional language of Programme and Project Management (PPM) contained MDALS (Master Data Assumptions Lists) and Earned Value Management (EVM).

The dialect of Programme and Project Management (PPM) in DE&S was very similar to the language of PPM that was used outside DE&S, but the language of Finance and Commercial differed significantly from non-DE&S finance and commercial language. (Shaw, 2010-2014)

Other functional language existed through a combination of factors, for example, the naming of the equipment that was *the project*, and the armed service that it was designed for, such as the Army, Navy or Air Force.

Also, embedded within that functional linguistic matrix were commercial, finance or project management lexicons that could operate at the same time but which took precedence at different periods of the 'Concept, Assess, Develop, Manufacture, In Service, Dispose' (CADMID) project cycle.

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<sup>63</sup> A mechanism to communicate the organisational processes that DE&S created, and which were used to manage the business of DE&S.

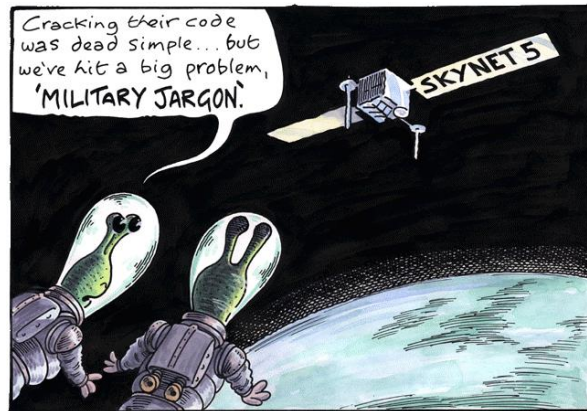
The functional and organisational linguistic frameworks appeared to function at times as group differentiators. Language and dialects also appeared to reinforce an in-group mentality through the use of closed language, and negatively identified the out-group because the out-group were less likely to understand either the language, or the subtleties of meaning that were encoded within the in-group's language.

These dialects were all variations of English, but all coloured with MOD speak. The result of this linguistic difference was twofold: it increased the realisation of anyone who was not in that group that they really were an outsider because they could not understand the technical language completely, and it also protected the in-group who had a degree of superiority and prestige through having to explain to outsiders what terms meant (Shaw, 2014j). The fact that these boundaries were represented in the vernacular humour of MOD, is shown by the cartoons that appeared in MOD publications and are reproduced here. Cartoon 4-2

shows how deeply they were rooted in the socio-technical and socio-culture cultures of MOD, and of DE&S.

In addition to the multiplicity of internal functional dialects, there were also the various argots of the military.





**Cartoon 4-2 Vernacular Representation of Jargon in a MOD Magazine**

Source: MOD, Crown Copyright

Even within the language of *the military* there were dialects. The language of the British Army differed from that of the Royal Navy (Jolly, 2008b, Jolly, 2008a), which differed again from the language of the Royal Air Force. Within these it was observed that there could exist an ambivalence towards the language of other military groups, for example, a civil servant, ex-British Army, was comfortable with using a Royal Navy term '*Runs ashore*' in conjunction with the British Army equivalent, '*pie and pint night*' (Shaw, 2011g). While, when on an Army base the researcher overheard someone asking: '*where were the heads?*' and the response from a uniformed member of the Army: '*we don't call them that round there, that's the Navy, we call them the bogs*' (Shaw, 2010j). That response was taken by the researcher as an indication that potential offence or embarrassment had been caused by the person asking for a facility by using the name that a different and competing group used for that facility. Linguistic difference through dialect or jargon might act both as a factor of group distinctiveness and also a barrier to cross-team working, thus creating an in-group/out-group dynamic.

The linguistic barrier between teams in DE&S was organisationally recognised and legitimised and was mediated through the use of team names and a 'jargon buster', (MOD, 2012) which was a database of common terms that were in use

in the MOD. The existence of the jargon buster was an element of the socio-technical organisation that group members used to help to understand other technical dialects of groups that were different to their own. Group difference was reinforced through the identity labelling that was combined with functional dialect to identify where differing functional groups sat on floor-plates as shown in section 4.3.3 on DE&S Corporate Branding.

To an outsider these labels were opaque, thus reinforcing the 'outsiderness'. Geographical labels also show the acronymysation of group identity, which made group identities opaque to the outsider. This then created a visible and cognitive linguistic boundary between the in-group and everyone else who did not understand the functional dialect of that group.

#### **4.7.3 Language and Hierarchy**

**Finding: Language changed depending on hierarchical place within DE&S. The difference in language of the 'Management Boards' and the senior grades from that of employees was legitimised by DE&S.**

It was a rite of passage when attempting to gain promotion, that a person would be given drafting tasks to learn the language of the new grade (Shaw, 2010h). Also groups of potential candidates for the Assessment and Development Centre (A&DC)<sup>64</sup> would need to be coached to succeed at the B2 level examinations and also to understand the language adjustments that were required:

*'We walked into the room and there, laid out on the table, were sheets of paper, as a process diagram on how to answer each question, and the words that the examiners were looking for in each question were highlighted. During the course of the session it was made clear to us that we had a better chance of passing if we put the buzzwords into the answers' (Shaw, 2009c)*

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<sup>64</sup> The A&DC was a mechanism where if one wanted to be promoted out of ones broader banded grade, one was assessed as being suitable for promotion.

Also, from a different assessment centre:

*'The tutor who was running it knew the right answers and we went through each one and some of us might have got it wrong, a lot got it right as well. And the tutor told us how to write the right answer, there's a technique'* (Shaw, 2011q).

The learning of an in-group language indicated that a new group identity appeared to be achieved through a form of '*buzzword bingo*', 1690 where all of the key words and phrases that the assessors were looking for in a response were learned and regurgitated parrot fashion.

In addition to learning to write and express themselves as managers or leaders, candidates were being conditioned. They were also separated by task and peer group from their old work teams because they started to lead teams rather than working within them and were given '*developmental tasks*' and other information which separated them from their old roles and teams (Shaw, 2014i). These exercises often occurred in '*learning sets*', groups of 5 - 7 members (Shaw, 2009c), which could then become longer lived self-help groups and peer support groups as their members moved through DE&S, and also further across MOD.

One of the effects of the placement of people into these groups was the development of a separate in-group mentality that separated them from their ex-peers. This separation also appeared to occur because this group were treated differently from others, they were the leadership group, and as such they received extra training and more information, and also opportunities to influence DE&S and also MOD, in a more corporate way. In addition, MOD and also DE&S, treated the two groups differently and labelled them as different, the group that were B2 grade and above became leadership material, or 'stakeholders', while the groups below were 'employees'.

This is shown in the following, which was taken from the instructions that accompanied a security survey in December 2013:

***“Employee survey – to be completed by C1 grades, military equivalents and below. This survey will assess staff attitudes, feelings and perceptions towards security. How they think security is currently managed, perceive the attitudes of senior leaders and how mechanisms for embedding a strong security culture are working.***

***Senior Stakeholder Survey – to be completed by band B2, their equivalents and above and will assess the DE&S senior stakeholders’ views on current and desired security culture” (MOD, 2015a).***

It was as though people magically became different once they had passed their examination (Shaw, 2013g) and became B2 grade staff. This may have been one of the reasons behind the perceived communications problems in DE&S that the type of language that was used by these senior stakeholder staff did not match that used by employees. This difference in language frequently caused tension because below the stakeholder group, the employee group members wanted to hear a different language - a straight message. This meant that there was immediate dissonance between the messages that were being given and those which were being received, for example: *‘This is just political spin by SoS (Secretary of State), and will be aimed at the SCS and not the cogs that turn the wheel!’* (Shaw, 2012m).

The change of language also appeared to affect the way that people identified with, and related to, their groups, teams and also to DE&S. On moving up into the B2 and B1 grade and also the SCS 1\* area of the DE&S hierarchy, the language of relatedness changed, perhaps deliberately, as a result of some of the tasks that a potential B2 grade had been given to socialise them for their new position, for example, drafting tasks for the Operating Centre management board (Shaw, 2009c).

At that level the language changed to structural, objective, and bureaucratic language. The outcome of this was that not only did a group member’s functional language change when they moved from one functional group to another, or from

the employee to the stakeholder group, it appears also that their language of identity also changed.

This change of language and role appeared to also engender a change in their relationship with DE&S. Stakeholders may therefore have been more likely to develop a stronger relationship with DE&S as an entity, rather than have strong relationships with the people that worked for them. Other people at the same grade, rather than becoming peers, became competitors for prestige and promotion, and therefore competitors for resources.

Perhaps because of the paradox, where even though employees professed not to identify with certain parts of the organisation, predominantly negatively identifying with DE&S, they were still committed to the superordinate goal of DE&S, supporting the front line, and to their functional work and teams. Therefore it appears that the ethos of 'front-line-first' was visible through identity, and that at this level, identification with a group in DE&S may be aligned with commitment to that group.

#### 4.7.4 Language and Emotional Intelligence

**Finding: Language indicated the existence of emotional intelligence at particular points within the hierarchy of DE&S.**

In DE&S, the bureaucracy was described as being *‘an emotional desert once you get to the B level’*, (Shaw, 2011aa) also, as the following B2 grade respondent indicates:

*‘The organisation is squeezing it out of them. If you’re in for long enough and you progress up through the ranks to a certain level or even above that. You’re being shaped and moulded as you go through it and part of that shaping and moulding is the withdrawal of your emotional being if you like’* (Shaw, 2011h).

The apparent effects of emotional intelligence and language are shown in the following excerpt from a conversation with a B1 grade civil servant who was an assessor at the Assessment and Development Centre (A&DC), they describe the extent of the behavioural issues that they had identified within the applicants for the A&DC:

*‘The other thing is quite interesting about behaviours in terms of emotional intelligence. The levels of emotional intelligence were zero, It’s all very transactional, very little emotional intelligence, very negative behaviours, very laddish culture, even the Abbeywood domestic culture, so all very negative type stuff’* (Shaw, 2011j).

It appeared that at C1 grade level and below leadership was valued, whereas process and bureaucratic management were valued at B2 grade levels and above. This then supports the view that emotional intelligence was a differentiating factor between an empathetic leader and a bureaucratic manager appeared to be confirmed from within the business independently:

*‘...I guess that’s part of being in a bureaucracy which was a very rule based organisation and some of those softer skills, like socialisation skills*

*that I once knew tend to be, I think are less and less now. Do we breed leaders or do we breed managers I think was an issue. Often the empathetic leader might consider some of those softer issues where the bureaucratic manager won't. The bureaucratic manager is here to deliver a job and that's how they deliver it' (Shaw, 2011j).*

The behaviour that was reported in the example appears to be credited with a lack of emotional intelligence, and may perhaps be associated with both the change of language at those grade levels, that is bureaucratic, de-emotionalised language, and also the change of relationship with peers and DE&S that appeared within staff at those levels.

The reasons for this implied lack of emotional intelligence are not wholly clear. One reason may be that the language of the organisational dialect of the leadership group, grade B2 staff and above, was structural, formal and devoid of emotion and references to people. The new language at the new level was defined by being objective, non-emotional, and evasive, rather than being straight forward and direct, and was pejoratively called '*OF5<sup>65</sup> bullshit*', (Shaw, 2010f) being characterised by the person, for example, not directly answering a direct question, but simply quoting '*party line*'.

As an employee moved up the hierarchy and into stakeholder's domain of the B2 and B1 staff, they stopped being employees, and became responsible for delivering a range of outputs and outcomes. At this leadership level a person was also responsible for both managing outcomes and outputs, and also employees. At this level, they were also providing the first level of organisationally legitimised formal leadership. This was differentiated from the management of staff that was carried out at the C1/C2 grade level and military equivalents.

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<sup>65</sup> OF 5 is a NATO Rank classification that equates to B2 grade Civil servant or Military equivalent.

There then appears to be a distinction between B2 and B1 grade staff, B1 grade staff delivering a range of tasks through their team, with little management of staff except their direct report B2 grade staffs, and counter-signing officer duties and in exceptional circumstances, some C1 grades.

The linguistic difference that appeared between grades could be characterised as thus: below B2 grade and above established 1\* level, the relationship of the group member to the group was likely to be expressed in terms of a social relationship and in social language.

For example, from an established and long serving B2 Grade Civil servant:

*'I think of MOD as an extended family, but I wouldn't say that there's the deep fondness and the deep affection that you get with either friends or family, but I do think that if you've got a good team together and esprit de corps you do enjoy one another's company'* (Shaw, 2011u).

This changed at the B1 grade and B2 grade level and up to established 1\* where the relationship between the group member and the group was more likely to be described in functional and non-emotional language. For example, people became *resources*, or *assets* (Shaw, 2013k).

The transition that occurred through the use of language, function and also through preparation for the Assessment and Development Centre (A&DC), appeared to cause some dissonance, hence the phrase '*selling your soul to PPM [Programme and Project Management]*' (Shaw, 2010e).

The change of language appeared also to coincide with the change from working in small groups to leading small groups. It may also have resulted from the need to put social, functional, and emotional distance between the stakeholder grades, at B2 level and above, and their employees who were below them.

The existence of a linguistic boundary between the functional *family* groups and the management groups was also identified in Operating Centre K, where the



differing, and often competing, objectives from each of the groups within that team construct were exposed through language and also expectations in the context of team-building activities:

*‘...My line manager, ... the head of the section, very much wanted it about business objectives and outcomes, vision, mission, strategy and all that stuff, ...’ (Shaw, 2011j).*

The respondent identifies that the head of the section, or Role Team wanted the outcomes of the event to be business focussed.

Whereas:

*‘...the team were totally against that and so we went with what the team wanted to do which was really more about having fun, getting to know each other and therefore building more effective relationships in the team leading to you know greater output, that was the logic behind it ...’ (Shaw, 2011j).*

But despite the difference in language between the management group and the employees, they both wanted to achieve the same outcome:

*‘...We let the team do it and it went off really very well...’ (Shaw, 2011j).*

This difference in language and expectation may have been one of the factors that led to formal team-building activities being thought of as ineffective. Team-building is discussed in section 5.4.

The change from direct pragmatic language to the abstract and conceptual, appeared to engender within those group members a reaction. When this structural language was used, members of the employee group, those below B2 grade, as opposed to the stakeholder group (those at B2 grade or equivalent and above), did not relate to it, calling it ‘guff’ (Shaw, 2010d).

Different levels of emotional intelligence appeared to be expressed through the use of language. It appeared that in DE&S language that was associated with low levels of emotional intelligence was devoid of emotion, and formed the basis of MOD speak, one example of which is provided here:

*‘Defence Forums – SAT planned for mid-June  
Meridio Reporting – Rollout tbc.I DIST dry run planned for 1st week of May  
DATS on XP – SAT now likely wec 27th April. UAT dates tbc  
Import/Export to TNA (National Archives) – SAT complete and went well  
OCS – if any users want to change back from Std Plus please ensure that the DIST PM is informed  
K2 – UAT is scheduled to start on 27th April’* (Shaw, 2015e)

This chimes with the Weberian concept that bureaucracy dehumanises people (Weber, 1946), and could be demonstrated in DE&S through the use of the metaphor of the emotional desert at the B grades and SCS and military equivalent levels of DE&S. For example, using words such as resources or assets instead of people, or lapsing into MOD. Language that appeared to be associated with high levels of emotional intelligence was more family oriented and contained metaphors that were associated with positive emotions. These were observed below the B grade level staff, the following comment was from a C2 grade civil servant. *‘My team was too small to be a team it was more like a family’* (Shaw, 2012e).

It is therefore quite possible that emotional intelligence was indeed strongly associated with the language that was used to describe their relationship with their team.

By looking at data from section 4.5.1, where respondents indicated how strongly they identified with DE&S, it appears that some B grade staff started to identify more ambivalently not only their new work group, but also with DE&S and or

MOD, as a corporate entity, sometimes even identifying to a greater extent with their new grade, or peer group even before they had been to the A&DC. The effect of identification with a new group, and potentially contradicting identities were indicated in the following example:

*'...And I think there was [...] occasionally torn loyalty between one's broader team downwards that you're responsible for delivering and the output and those in a broader organisation you're working in. That's about putting the service need before yourself and there was that sort of challenge sometimes'* (Shaw, 2011s).

There was a very high failure rate for applicants on the promotion schemes and some people took three or more attempts to succeed at the A&DC (Shaw, 2009b). The first attempt was to learn how to do it, the second was get it right and to pass and the third attempt was only if the first two had failed (Shaw, 2010k). Candidates were judged by a group of assessors who were their potential peers and seniors within the group that they were seeking to join. From the responses given, it appears that the B grades were the first level that real power and authority were shown, with the B1 grade level actually being the first level of leadership, as opposed to the B2 grade as espoused by DE&S. In attempting to explain this change of relationship and also the emotional state it appears that at B2 and B1 grades and military equivalents a person was expected by DE&S, to be developing a corporate view of DE&S. But new B2 and B1 grades and their military equivalents were likely also to hold a strong, familial relationship with the teams that they had managed, especially if they were promoted from within that team. This relationship dynamic was often unbalanced, causing the person to struggle to understand when to behave corporately and when to preference their Role Team above the needs of DE&S.

An unsuccessful manager at this level might suffer from tension, as they would be unable to balance those demands. Field notes April 2012 Nh1, conversation with a C2 grade Civil Servant, discussing how their 1\* was reacting to leading

their team. How that identity transition was managed by group members was not clear, but it did appear that one element in the successful transition was the need for a clear understanding of what was required in order to succeed at that new level in the organisation. The person needed to understand the contradiction between corporate and team requirements, and where to exhibit them appropriately and to be emotionally intelligent. They also needed to understand the language that they needed to use in order to assuage other people's fears about change, and not be subsumed into the low emotional intelligence relationship that could be the dominant relationship at that new level.

However, if a person could make the transition to a balanced relationship then they could go on to become an SCS/military star grade. This was observed at 2\* level and above where the tension disappeared as they appeared to be able to understand which relationship with either DE&S or their teams that they led should be enacted at any one time, and which language they should use to show that relationship and engender action from their teams.

The reason for the newly promoted person identifying with their new group more than their old group appeared to be, firstly, because they wanted the promotion and also they understood how difficult it was to become a member of the leadership group. Thus the leadership group appeared to have a greater value to the member than did their previous group.

The concept of emotional intelligence was not captured within the initial research question. This was a discovery that came from the data. The following discussion makes some attempt to explain why emotional intelligence and language at the change from employee to stakeholder in DE&S affects organisational behaviour.

Boyatzis (2014), Boyatzis et al. (2014) describes how two brain systems, the Default mode Network (DMN) and the Task Positive Network (TPN) are contradictory, when one network is engaged the other is less able to function. The implication of this for this thesis is that as group members pass through the

A&DC they are socialised more into the Task Positive and non-emotional elements of DE&S and are therefore more likely to remain in the non-emotional, logical mode, rather than reverting back to the more emotional Default Mode Network, that according to Boyatzis et al. (2014), more competent leaders are able to support.

#### **4.7.5 Language, Gossip and Group Coherence.**

**Finding: There was a pattern of language and a trajectory of linguistic change that was apparent in meetings.**

Noted from a meeting in Conference Room 2, Spur 4 Ensleigh.

*10 minutes before the meeting starts, most people of the Operating Centre representatives are sitting on the side of the room next to the corridor, and the door. There are two sets of seats, those directly around the table, and those next to the wall. (The ones nearest to the wall are known colloquially as 'the cheap seats'). Conversations at this point are light and mainly social, two people are talking about football, and two are talking about their children at school. The other attendees at this point appear to be either listening to those other conversations, looking at their phones, or preparing their papers for the meeting. When the Chair arrives and everyone has settled themselves down, the room goes quiet and chair now moves to the agenda introductions. The formal introductions round the table start with Name, organisation and role. The chair goes back to the agenda but is reminded that people in the cheap seats had not introduced themselves. The introduction here in the cheap seats is different to those around the table, it is just name and organisation. There is at least one military person at the meeting, but they are not wearing uniform, but a business suit. There is one visitor, who hands out an A4 sheet that introduces him, his group and their work (Shaw, 2011ac).*

This observation identified two types of conversation, one type that was concerned with DE&S functions, and one that was more personal and non-work related.

Dunbar proposes that in social situations, in order to improve group coherence there occurs “social linguistic grooming”, or gossip (Dunbar, 1998). Dunbar excludes formal situations when he uses his definition, but when the same evolutionary criteria of group coherence were applied by this research to formal work based conversations it appears that a pattern emerged. It appears that in a formal meeting, the trajectory of information content was firstly informal moving to formal and then most likely back to be informal again when the formal part of the meeting has been completed. This type of meeting was not a meeting to introduce new members to a group, but was a formal meeting which was task based. The socialisation activity that took place was more akin to a group coherence activity, with firstly social information being passed, moving on as appropriate to functional information. When the group progressed further into the meeting, everyone appeared to be aligned and working together. This may have been because there was a super ordinate goal, or because everyone at the table was in some sense, an information professional, or just because most people were from one functional so in many ways are aligned to a single functional area and perhaps form one psychological group.

Because the language used in these interactions was not purely social but was also functionally and contextually specific, a new term, *functional linguistic grooming* could be applied. This new term enabled the researcher to account for the use of language in this specific context of improving group coherence within an organisational and socio-cultural bent. The finding of this trajectory and its information content further reinforced the proposition of this thesis that expands Dunbar’s concept of social linguistic grooming, see Dunbar (1998), Dunbar (1991), Lehmann et al. (2007).

It then follows that it may be the case that ‘gossip’ can be categorised into two types, that of the social, such as sport talk, or family talk, that promotes social coherence, thus falling into what Dunbar calls Social Linguistic Grooming, and also a separate type, where the content of the gossip is more task oriented and functional, and is designed to promote functional and technical coherence within

a work group, and may therefore be, what this thesis calls, '*functional linguistic grooming*'.

This characterisation then expands the suggestion by Foster (2004), (2006), Levin and Arluke (1987), Luna et al. (2013), Michelson and Mouly (2000), Noon and Delbridge (1993), Rosnow and Fine (1976) who all indicate that, in organisations, gossip plays a role in group coherence. Further, the use of the word 'gossip' by Foster and others chimes with the work of Dunbar (1998), Dunbar (2004), on social linguistic grooming and gossip, one use of which is to promote group coherence.

#### **4.7.6 Informal Language Existed Within Both Formal and Informal Activities**

**Finding: Informal language as gossip was observed to exist within informal and formal group coherence activities.**

The commonality of social, as well as functional group size, was also observed in the restaurants and coffee areas:

*' But you've only got to stand above one of the coffee shops in Abbeywood and you can see it. How many times do you see a table with dissimilar shirts? The bloody idiots in the camouflage gear, the RAF guys in their shirts and the Navy in their shirts. Very occasionally you'll see them. The chances of you seeing one of each sat down together having a coffee were virtually non-existent, judged on my own experience. I'm not across in Abbeywood very often, but you see groups of people and that's just the way they are' (Shaw, 2011v).*

The group sizes observed in these social situations were predominantly and consistently triadic and dyadic. Occasionally these groups would be more than five strong, but close observation of these groups suggested that there would be more than one conversation going on at any one time (Shaw, 2010-2014). This implies that when these social groups became larger than five to eight members

they broke down into groups of two to three where meaningful conversations were enacted.

Occasionally the drive for company, i.e., a common interest, doing a crossword, overcame differences. It was observed within Operating Centre D, for example, that there was a group of three military personnel who went to the restaurant every day to do the crossword at lunchtime, the members of this group were British Royal Air Force, Australian Army, and British Army, (Shaw, 2010c) partially contradicting the view that was observed by the Captain in the Royal Naval Reserve quoted above, in relation to group mixing in DE&S. These informal, social groups linked the socio-technical organisation with the socio-cultural.

These interstitial groups could be characterised as being on a continuum that ran between those groups that were fully legitimised and supported by DE&S, such as faith groups which had padres, chaplains, and prayer rooms (Shaw, 2010-2014) And those that were not, such as the model train group that met monthly (Shaw, 2008c).

Faith groups were seen to be positive; whereas the smokers, who were also supported and legitimised by the imposition of smoking shelters and a series of rules (DE&S, 2009d, DE&S, 2009c, DE&S, 2009b, DE&S, 2009a, Dumont and Louw, 2009, Ilka et al., 2009, Kumar and Matsusaka, 2009, Platek and Kemp, 2009, Vallejo, 2009) that prescribed where they could smoke, were only tolerated (Shaw, 2010-2014).

In fact, smokers' groups were heavily managed and could be viewed negatively by other team members, both because of the health implications of smoking, but also because of the number of smoking breaks that they took during a working day, thus being perceived to be away from their desk and not working (Shaw, 2011b). But what the smokers were often doing during their breaks was linking into the socio-cultural gossip and information exchange networks that existed informally in DE&S. This appeared to be recognised by some senior staff who, during times of organisational change might go to the smoking areas to listen to



what people were 'really saying' (Shaw, 2011y). By engaging in this form of exchange participants again linked the socio-cultural to the socio-technical via the concept that is proposed in this thesis, that of functional linguistic grooming. *Functional linguistic grooming* as introduced by this thesis provides group coherence as functionally directed gossip. Both of these language types may be used together or separately, and at times each will take precedence.

The following was an observed, informal coffee meeting that took place in one of the Abbeywood Neighbourhood coffee areas. The cafés or restaurants in Abbeywood were all centrally placed, one in each Neighbourhood. In that way, an employee could easily pick up a coffee either on their way to their desk, or to a meeting, and they could also pop down to get a snack or meal. Within Abbeywood, coffee meetings were socially and functionally accepted.

A typical meeting goes thus: two or three people will get together, either by email, or physically on the floorplate and say something such as '*fancy a catch up?*' This meant 'let's have a break for moment'.

The reply was often '*yes, why not?*'. Purses or wallets will be retrieved from desks, or perhaps one person would pay for the drinks this time, thus sharing the burden and ensuing that the gift is reciprocated. The group would go down to the café and buy coffee, tea and perhaps a snack to go with it, chatting all the while. When they get to a table the conversations start in earnest. Often the conversation would start with such as '*did you watch telly last night?*' or football or sport, occasionally it might start with 'did you hear about x?' the content would be primarily socially based.

Sometimes, however, the start of the conversation will be as in this example, 'how are you getting on with what you have been asked to deliver?', thus moving immediately into a conversation that is functionally, rather than socially based. More often, however, the meeting starts socially, perhaps for the briefest of time and then moved onto functional content. If the functional subject matter was

particularly intense, then social matters may be interjected back into the formal conversation, the comments often associated with black humour.

The outcome of these conversations appeared to be that they allowed participants to *'let off steam'*, to reassure people if they felt that things were going badly, if had done something wrong and had been criticised.

They therefore acted as mechanisms to promote group coherence through the combined use of social and functional linguistic grooming. (Shaw, 2008b).

#### **4.7.7 Metaphor and the Reality of Language: Families and Tribes**

**Finding: Metaphors in DE&S were used to describe groups and how people related to those groups.**

Metaphors were used by group members to describe how they related to their groups. The metaphor of family was noted as being used by 40 informants and was also noted throughout the research as being used across grades to describe a relationship with a group:

*'....I think of MOD as an extended family....and I suppose I think of my team as an extended part of family, so for me it's a sort of family substitute'*  
(Shaw, 2011u).

The group that this respondent was in was part of the corporate DE&S, but for this respondent, the concept of team and family were linked, thus showing some dissonance between the concepts of the para-familial and the para-social,<sup>66</sup> in that expressed in this way the concept of family is a positive concept, as opposed to the other descriptions of tribes that are normalised as negative ways to describe groups in DE&S. Throughout the research, the language that group members used to describe their relationship with their groups included implicit references to group size, for example:

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<sup>66</sup> Para meaning as though it were true but it is not really 'true'.

*‘... But it was a small team though; we’re more like a family than a team’*  
(Shaw, 2012e).

The responses made by interviewees indicated that the metaphor of family was associated with a group size which was ‘small’ and also that the small group sizes concerned were like many families, and thus were comfortable concepts for people to be within.

The data also suggest that historically pre-DE&S teams and organisations may have been viewed by members as being more family-like than DE&S teams were.

*‘...See I don’t feel like a family now, but I did. I did 20 years ago when I knew lots and lots of people and in fact, I knew their families. Again, going back to that sort of small organisation, although it was part of a much bigger organisation’* (Shaw, 2011j).

The respondent, a B1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre H had lost a lot of friends to other groups, and was now working in a larger, more impersonal formal organisation, as opposed to a smaller, more tightly and socially bonded group that had possessed a strong local geographic identity. This may have affected the way that he felt about DE&S, potentially making him feel negatively, or ambivalent, towards it.

There may have been several reasons for the prevalence of the family metaphor in DE&S, one of which may have been the size of the group to which the metaphor was applied, which were usually small groups. It may also have been used to describe how the person felt about the social, rather than the functional nature of the relationship that they had with their group, and also their levels of comfort within that group. This may then link the metaphor to the informal, socio-cultural, rather than the formal, socio-technical organisation of DE&S, forming a further link to emotional intelligence that has been identified previously. There may also be a further reason for the prevalence of this metaphor. It may have been the

case that people who worked with family members may have joined or encouraged family members to join because of the job prospects.

There were in DE&S at the time of the study, for example, in Operating Centre D, three true familial partnerships, where both partners worked within the same Operating Centre.<sup>67</sup> There were also known to be two other families where partners worked in different Operating Centres or other parts of the MOD. There was also known to be at that time, one family grouping where children worked in different Operating Centres to parents (Shaw, 2010-2014).

One respondent related how she met her husband walking along the corridor (Shaw, 2011e), while another said: '*...My mum and dad actually met whilst they were working both in the MOD, in one of the outstations*' (Shaw, 2011q).

The existence of these relationships may have blurred the boundary between metaphor and reality, because not only were some groups in DE&S like a family but they could also genuinely comprise family members, meaning that people may feel more closely bonded with their teams if they have some imagined or real, familial relationship within them.

The use of the combined reality and metaphor of family was also seen within the '*wider military service family*'. This concept of the wider family existed in DE&S because of the proximity of the military to the civil service there, and also because of the stability of the civil service as an employer. It was not unusual to see people being given long service awards for 40 years of service and, on one occasion at a retirement, the retiree brought in their apprentice indenture papers and was accompanied on their retirement by two of the three people that they had joined the MOD with as apprentices, (Shaw, 2011z) who were still working in the MOD.

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<sup>67</sup> There may, of course, have been others that the researcher was not aware of, because of the implications to the research of gathering this type of personal, sensitive data.

A further example of the use of family based metaphors was used in conjunction with language such as brotherhood, kinship, and the '*Band of Brothers*'. This metaphor was then transferred into DE&S with, and within, the military personnel that were posted into DE&S.

*'... a good friend of mine...he had nephews of soldiers he's commanded, under his command still, so in other words there's such a family orientation many join and re-join and so there was a very strong family connection, they took great pride in what their predecessors had done almost as if what their family had done because it's an extension of the family. The ethos, as a sort of kinship business, a friend of mine, does talk about the broader family of the corps and in doing so he had people in his headquarters who were responsible for recruiting all the way through giving out benevolence to veterans. I mean, brothers and sisters were close because they share the experience of their family. There is something about a shared experience with those that have done things together and the more demanding and challenging it was the greater the feeling of brotherhood amongst them...'* (Shaw, 2011s).

The respondent quoted here, a 1\* Officer in the British Army, describes some of the complexity and factors within relationships in the British Army and how they was managed and perpetuated. This appeared to produce a view of shared experience that was linked to exclusivity, that there was a para-kinship relationship that existed within the military that might discriminate negatively and prevent those group members having a more positive relationship with the civilians that they worked with and with whom they had a shared experience and ethos, as opposed to just a shared culture.

The direct use of the family metaphor to describe small groups, and also the relationship that group members had with their groups, was displayed by the actions of group members and also the other metaphors that they used such as support: *a shoulder to cry on*, and parental terms, such as: '*now, now, children*'

by team-leaders or others to indicate that either *emergency banter* (Shaw, 2013j) had got out of hand or that the group needed to get back to work after having a light-hearted moment.

#### **4.7.8 Tribe and Tribal Were Vernacularized and Possessed Particular Meanings in DE&S.**

**Finding: The second metaphor that was in evidence was the use of the word tribe and tribal to describe groups and group behaviours. While group members used the word family to describe their teams in a positive manner, the words: tribe and tribal had a more negative connotation.**

Some of 'tribal' behaviours were reported by respondents, the following response was from a C1 grade civil servant in 2010:

*'...I think there's a power dynamic going on there and there's tribalism'*  
(Shaw, 2011k).

Terms relating to tribe and tribalism were used in relation to group and personal position within the DE&S hierarchy.

This implies that it was perceived that there was a link between identity, relatedness to groups, group size, and the groups place in the DE&S hierarchy, although this perception may have been sub-conscious:

*'I think some of the tribalism is driven by the team leaders, that's my opinion'* (Shaw, 2011h).

The following response confirms the nature of group difference in the MOD, and the fact that many respondents saw 'tribalism' as being widespread in MOD:

*'There were particular branches, you could describe the same for the Army, or the Air Force, or the Civil Service, you've got all sorts of tribes within the MOD. So within the workforce of the Ministry of Defence, you see all these different, some of them were visible tribal things because you're wearing a different uniform'* (Shaw, 2012h).

Within the interviews initially there was no direct question about tribes and tribalism, because this was construed as being a leading question. However, it became apparent through the unprompted use of these words by respondents

that the concept of tribe and tribalism appeared to be important to respondents, was prevalent in the vernacular and was explicitly associated with groups and group behaviours.

The use of the words tribe, tribal and tribalism appeared to be more predominant than the use of the word family to describe the relationship with, and behaviour of a group. One context in which the metaphor of tribe was used in relation to group behaviours in DE&S and appeared to be used to indicate protectionist, territorial empire building and non-corporate behaviours:

*'I guess this was a tribal thing, each of the services compares themselves to the other two, and we civilians compare ourselves to them. That is human nature isn't it?'* (MOD, 2011).

The view quoted above was given in an interview given by a 2\* civil servant to an internal MOD magazine. But these behaviours were also seen as being part of human nature, and appeared to be driven by social comparison and social categorisation:

*'That's human nature though and I don't think that will change. .... And tribal, because we still, although we try not to be adversarial, the nature of our business makes us adversarial'* (Shaw, 2011j).

The importance of the phrase '*human nature*' and the concept of these behaviours being hard-wired into people because they were endemic in DE&S chimes Nicholson (2000 p 207). It suggests that many of the factors that appeared to affect group behaviours in DE&S that were unconsciously exhibited. The link to those behaviours being hard wired into people, or a sub-conscious response, appears to place the use of metaphor to describe behaviour through a group and group size characteristic within the field of evolutionary psychology and anthropology as a generalizable behaviour, because as Nicholson (2000) describes, people are naturally tribal. In addition, the belief that those factors



were *hard-wired* into people indicates that people were experiencing and/or observing those behaviours on a regular basis.

#### **4.7.9 The Creation of DE&S Did not End the Use of the Tribe Metaphor.**

**Finding: The creation of DE&S did not appear to change the way the people used the metaphor of tribe to describe their group.**

*‘I think the bringing together of DE&S might actually make it [tribalism] worse. I saw it more in DLO, although I saw it in DPA I think simply because DPA was so stripped down, but you could see it beginning to happen in DPA with sort of setting targets in what they used to call cluster groups and things like that for performance where you would start to get maybe teams trying to complete with teams, other teams to do the best and then the clusters trying to compete with clusters rather than everybody trying to do’ (Shaw, 2011o).*

This example from an informant in Operating Centre A illustrates the organisational factors that had been prevalent in the DPA, and how those factors exacerbated the competition between teams. The same was also related by an informant in Operating Centre B:

*‘...I mean, there was a tribal, almost adversarial sometimes, approach in DE&S. Two tribes came together, not because they wanted to, I’m talking about the DLO and the DPA. So that was interesting enough, you still...I mean they came together about five years ago, something like that, and for a good two to three years people were still ‘oh that’s the old DPA site.’ (Shaw, 2011j).*

The organisational legitimisation of making teams compete for resources appeared to make people and groups behave in ways that were contrary to the ascribed collaborative ways of working that DE&S and also the MOD wanted.

This may be as a result of competing for resources being an archaic behaviour that Price and Cybulski described as a characteristic of archaic tribes (Price and Cybulski, 2007), thus the existence of this type of behaviour may have sub-cognitively reinforced the feeling that DE&S was a tribal organisation, because the tribes had to compete for resources.

It was also apparent that the terms tribe and tribalism had a heritage in DE&S and were in use within the DPA and DLO before DE&S existed.

*'We have to have, you know, six aircraft carriers because that's the only way, even though the Navy probably think, actually we could probably get by with one or two, but if I don't ask for six I won't get the two that I want, and who cares what the Air Force or the Army want that's what I need. Whereas if they'd broken those tribal barriers down here's the joint picture that's what we reckon we'd need'* (Shaw, 2011q).

It also appears that geographic identity was felt by many to have had some connection to the existence of the 'tribe', as the ability to identify the 'tribe' was couched in site terms, in addition to functional and behavioural terms. Throughout DE&S the predominant theme was that the civil servants thought that the military were the tribes, but perhaps that was only because the military were, at the time, more visible and cohesive as a group than were civil servants.

*'... I think when I used it [tribe], It was probably because you'd put the service context into my head. I think I'm using it in a context where it's a group of people who've taken a conscious decision that they were part of this group and being part of the group was one of the principal things that defines them. So if you're in the RAF you're a member of the RAF first and you work in DE&S second in all likelihood. And in the same way that I might be a civil servant first and work in MOD second or wherever it is. So I think that's the sense in which I was using it and it was principally your introduction of the services that set me off on that path'* (Shaw, 2011h).

The response was given after the respondent, an SCS 1\* had, un-prompted, used the word 'tribe', and the interviewer then sought to find out exactly what they meant by the use of the word, (Shaw, 2011q) and if the respondent could identify who were the tribes. The example reinforces the commonly held civilian view that the military were the real tribes in DE&S.

It also suggests that there was a hierarchy of identity, from DE&S, to Operating Centre, to Project Team, to Role Team, that combined with military service and professional identities and contributed to a hierarchy of groups, or in the vernacular 'tribes' in DE&S that a person could belong to or identify with. This then appears not to fit with the construct of the archaic tribe, where a member could only possess membership of one tribe, bringing the definition of the vernacular 'tribe' that was self-described in DE&S closer to the characteristics of a neo-tribe, where a member can possess multiple memberships as proposed by for example, Maffesoli (1998) or Price and Cybulski (2007). The hierarchy of identification with a group size that was called tribalism is also shown in the following response:

*'...the people I worked with 20 years ago didn't see themselves as the big organisation, their allegiance was to the depot, that small depot. Here the way we're...you know if you're in...you do get allegiances in much smaller.....if people want to call it tribalism that's up to them. I think that's one of the key challenges and it's the leadership challenge of an organisation was to make sure we're all pulling in that same direction...'*  
(Shaw, 2011u).

This respondent had oversight of all of DE&S' activities and had experienced all of the other Operating Centres' behaviours by observation and once again makes the distinction between rivalry and tribalism: one being positive, the other negative. From a civilian point of view it appeared that the worst tribalism was seen between the military services, because it happened at all times and could be politically driven, and only went away when there was a superordinate goal

or mutual benefit to be gained by working together. The complexity of identities and nested groups also appears to indicate that the groups and members may have had, depending on function, size and place, different loyalties and affiliations that may have all been coherent with the organisational ethos.

The need to belong to groups, and also the reduction in meaningfulness to members as a group becomes larger, is shown by the following response from a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre C. They found that the metaphor of tribe to be helpful in describing the reality of belonging to a number of groups:

*'...You need to create tribes, people...we're pack animals, you know we generally work better in teams, there are the few odd individuals that like to work on their own, but they still work for getting recognition or whatever, they still like to come back to some place and sort of put their ideas and suggestions in. DE&S is quite a big beast to get your head around. You can get your head around, say, the strategic objectives of the DE&S, people scoff at the thing of understanding how what you do contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the organisation, they could be very useful in terms of managing those interfaces between the tribes, because you could have individual tribes or whatever, providing they were all at some point working to the same goal and the chief of that tribe understands that'* (Shaw, 2011h).

This response appears to once again link the fact that people need to belong to groups to being in a 'tribe', and that there is an additional concept of 'home', the coming back to a settled place, indicating that there may be a geographical link within the metaphor of the tribe.

The previous extracts have indicated how metaphor interacted with identity, culture, and group size to allow the vernacular concept of tribalism to exist within DE&S and that description appeared to apply particularly to military personnel.

The military view of the civil service group behaviour appeared to be completely different in that they saw the Civil Service as being more nebulous:

*'Of course there's the semi-amorphous mass in the middle of the supporting groups, they're not aligned to Land, Sea or Air they're aligned to the general greater good so in a sense my answer is very output team focussed' (Shaw, 2011q).*

The use of this label by the military may indicate that the military cultures were considered to be hard and visible, and having a different identity which was manifest through uniforms and formal rules, whereas there appeared to be no civil service culture that could be articulated.

However, civilian groups could also be included in the conceptual label of a tribe. A B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre C showed what appears to be a typical view of how the tribes were viewed and also how they fractured, in an organisational context:

*'You could probably say, from a top level the tribes were the RAF, the Army and the Navy. But if you broke it down into like Land area, I'd say it even breaks down to teams. Teams were very tribal, we all like to look after ourselves and we all recognize the fact that you feed upwards but it's definitely a 'this was my team and I'm looking after us' and tribalism was the culture I suspect that goes on within the team' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The metaphorical and real behaviours that were identified by respondents were all linked in some way to the concept of individual identity and identification with a group, and how people defined themselves in relation to that group and to other groups. The following respondent was a C1 civil servant in Operating Centre G:

*'To me there were elements of identity of a group, people belong to you know, civilian or military and that type of stuff. What it means to me was people's careers tend to operate in specific circles which tend to be either in environments like the Sea environment, Air environment or maybe the*

*Weapons environment. There is a competitive friction between the services at all times. Some of that was because of the political mandate to keep funding flowing to get different projects going, to keep each one of the services in a position of strength. Although those different tribes can work together for what works for them the best, to give them that position of strength, they're not also adverse from [sic] saying that 'my project's more important than yours because'. And they'll carry on...they'll be quite competitive about that and there's an element of indoctrination in that'* (Shaw, 2011q).

It was therefore not surprising to hear: *'Yes because I still see there was still a DPA tribe in evidence and a DLO tribe in evidence'* (Shaw, 2011h). This phrase was heard in multiple locations across DE&S between 2008 and 2014 and it appeared to be one indicator of the stickiness of the DPA and DLO socio-technical and socio-cultural cultures and also the longevity of the metaphors that were used to describe those cultures and also the concepts of the groups as tribes.

#### **4.7.10 Tribal Cultures or Group Behaviours?**

**Finding: Characteristics of the teams as vernacular *tribes* appeared as a specific cultural trait within those groups.**

By using the characterisation of para-tribal characteristics and behaviours as described in section 2.7 a series of characteristics and group behaviours manifested itself in the day to day workings of DE&S:

*'...There's the tribal boundaries if you like, that were purely organisational, so you get a 'well we're DOSG [Defence Ordnance Safety Group] and our mission and goal is...', whilst at the high level DE&S was the high level mission and goals, ours was a subset of that, slightly different to the mission and goal that your PT [Project Team] tribe have got. We've got different sets and we're being measured on different things sort of thing,*

*so suddenly if we're working together on something whilst there's a common goal in the end there's a bit of a friction there. If you take it to the extreme where it's actually not a good thing, it's where people were starting to act to the loyalties of their tribe even though they might suspect that actually we shouldn't be doing this because to support that team and the broader goal we ought to be doing this and the classic one was when you see the tribal fighting if you like in the media or whatever, between the three services talking about budget sort of things and so on' (Shaw, 2011h).*

This example of the vernacular use of the word *tribe* to describe a particular set of group characteristics and behaviours chimes with previous examples in that it shows awareness of the political and financial costs of tribalism to DE&S, and also to the wider MOD. The phenomenon of tribalism in DE&S, its precursor organisations and also the costs that it incurred were alluded to by the House of Commons Defence Select Committee:

*'..... to prevent the incidence of any disagreements between disparate Profit Centres as to which part of the Technical Solution falls within their workshare and which does not – thereby promoting better working relations between groups of people otherwise divided by tribal loyalties' (Office, 2012).*

In addition to military and Civil Service cultures, groups and their members in DE&S could also possess professional cultures based around the function that they performed or which they identified with. These might also come under the conceptual category of the *tribe*. These group distinctiveness factors have been described throughout this thesis and they were also supported by the vernacular language, which described these groups and cultures as 'tribes', or 'families'. The use of this language enabled the creation of boundaries between groups, highlighting their differences.

The following example from a C2 civil servant encapsulates a range of groups and culture labels that were found within DE&S:

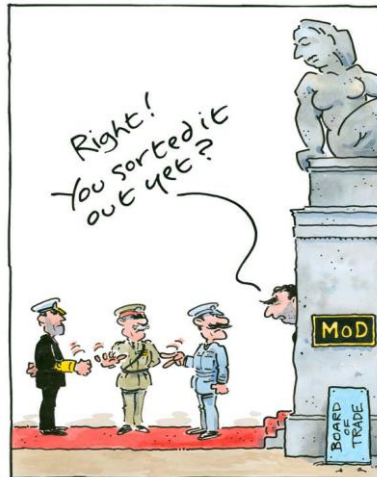
*‘ Certainly amongst the three services, there’s intense tribalism. They were very parochial. There’s also to a...what’s the word?...I would say lesser extent, various specialisms within the civilian’s side, Contracts people stick together because of the commercial nature of their job, all people tend to be a very close group. I worked in Quality Assurance for a while which was also very friendly family focussed group, went across IPT boundaries because we were functionally reporting to the head of Quality. So there’s definitely tribalism in groups’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

It then appears that tribal behaviour appeared to be a cultural norm in DE&S, both from socio-technical point of view, but also socio-culturally:

*‘again there’s the whole thing about some people who were very much a part of a tribe and never ever come out of it, their whole career was in a stovepipe of being commercial or being a project management engineer and others who have a looser affiliation and swap badge’ (Shaw, 2012h).*

But not everyone stayed in their function, especially if they were seeking promotion where they would both may leave their team and also their peer group to move up the organisational hierarchy of DE&S. In DE&S, the tribe appeared to be enacted particularly at an Operating Centre level or 1\* level. Tribalism was not limited to DE&S, it was also seen as negatively affecting the whole of Defence. Cartoon 4-3 shows how this is portrayed in an in-house magazine.





#### **Cartoon 4-3 Tribal Rivalries Portrayed in Vernacular Humour**

Source: MOD, Crown Copyright

The cartoon illustrates the in-fighting between the military services at the highest levels, and by the leaders of each service. The use of a cartoon in an in-house magazine to satirize these behaviours suggests that the behaviours were viewed as an integral element within the organisational culture of MOD. By extension, it can be assumed, DE&S must have been affected by them in some way.

Humour is often subversive and frequently pokes fun at those in authority in an acceptable manner, while allowing a serious point to be made.

Another theme that appeared throughout the responses in connection with the metaphor of the tribe and tribalism, was that tribal behaviour could also be used to protect the group:

*'When I worked in IPTs [Integrated Project Teams] in the DPA there was a strong tribal message about protecting ourselves and our own information in particular, [there were] issues with bending the rules about the way business was done. I would suggest that's one of the reasons why we're in such a pickle now and it's become custom and practice just to ignore, flout the rules and regulation...' (Shaw, 2011k).*

This behaviour might be thought to be somewhat anachronistic within a supposedly collaborative organisation that possessed one super-ordinate goal of supplying the military. But reality said otherwise, where people form groups or are formed into groups then these groups take on the persona of a tribe as defined in section 2.7, but what happens is that they become members of a para-tribe.

The response from a B1 grade civil servant below shows how the socio-cultural norms within DE&S could work against the socio-technical rules of DE&S, to produce unintended effects, in this case by the manipulation and sharing of information.

It may also indicate the underlying behaviours that are presented in Cartoon 4-3 existed in DE&S.

*‘.... Going back to the power struggle and the fiefdoms, we have tribes. We belong to a service and you know the jokes about the fact that those in the grey uniform and those who drive a desk etc., we have those sort of tribes. I see a bigger issue with cliques where people were forming these little teams, these little fiefdoms and it’s almost like the playground, you know, you’re not coming in. For me, the tribalism was a much more culturally steeped environment. We on this floor-plate could work really well as a tribal organisation supporting the big chief and working together to the common aim. These, for me, were positive elements of tribalism, it’s when that splits into cliques that you start to get the negative influences...’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

The description of groups in DE&S as *tribes* and their behaviour being seen as *tribal* therefore appears to have been a predominant theme in DE&S. These descriptions were predominantly negative:

*‘...There were groups, Individual tribes, I think, my understanding of it is, they have their own ethos, culture, ways of working, language, and you*

*can see that certainly from a military perspective and also the sub military, if you go Navy, Air Force and Land. And also within that there's the various military groups, for instance in Land if you've got the [...], the Royal Engineers, the Artillery, they all have their own different cultures as well. You know, there's different features. From the civilian side I think, .about the grades and roles and management levels or tribes let's say, but the competitiveness and the bestiality ....But in terms of tribes, yes, you have different cultural groups. They're all their own little tribes in their own way. It's a network, a community' (Shaw, 2011h).*

It also appears as indicated by this informant, a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A, that that these groups possessed a series of characteristics that included language, culture, and also an ethos which could be consistently displayed and which could be used to positively or negatively to enhance the reputation of the group. This suggests that the concept of the tribe that was recognised by group members may also be associated with group size and language. It also suggests that the concept of the tribe in DE&S may be synonymous with both a network and community, rather than just being a label for a stable group.

Functional groups were also, because of their geographical spread, networks of members who had worked together and who had known each other socially and functionally, even though they may not be closely located in the same office. This concept of the group as a network might also apply to military personnel who were posted to different areas on a regular basis, thus splitting up the geographically collated tribe, but creating in its stead a more fluid network of members.

Even though some respondents felt that the *tribe* and *tribalism* were natural states, echoing Nicholson (2000), several responses suggested that these concepts were forced on group members through a combination of the DE&S

organisational structure and the socio-technical culture, for example this view is from a Royal Naval 1\*:

*'...In a way I don't see DE&S as being tribal, although I think in some respects it had been forced to go tribal and you don't see it directly, but you do see it indirectly. I think, at the moment, there's possibly not a lot of doubt that the MOD sector in headquarters was tribal and you sort of go tribal when you're threatened. And there's an Army, Navy, Air Force tribalism going on at the moment, of course there is. But I think in a sort of an indirect way it [DE&S] is tribal because there's the Afghanistan tribe, there's the in a way the Nuclear Safety tribe and there's the rest. So I think there's a sort of enforced tribalism and I don't think that each of those areas was openly exercising it' (Shaw, 2011q).*

It appears therefore, that the DE&S socio-technical culture produced several effects that were related to the development of a para-tribal culture, such as legitimised social categorisation through the imposition of personal and geographic identity and also particular legitimised team sizes. As these teams had to compete for funds it appears that competition for resources may have forced teams to behave in 'tribal' ways that were not necessarily compatible with the DE&S corporate good.

The drive for group success and economic need appeared to be behind the development of tribal behaviours in DE&S, and prior to that the DPA and the DLO. It appears that those factors all added to the distinctiveness of groups. Also, the combination of these factors appeared to force teams, who were already in evolutionary stable group sizes with defined and identifiable identities and boundaries, to exhibit evolutionary, rather than intellectual behaviours, such as competing for resources.

This group size boundary in DE&S also appeared to be coincidental with a linguistic boundary that was observed in Operating Centres. This pattern is found in anthropological literature, and described by Dunbar (1993a p 684) Hill and

Dunbar (2003 p 67) who indicates that it corresponds with the mega-band or tribe, where a linguistic difference is seen to be identified in archaic indigenous groups. Therefore there appears to be both consistency in organisational design of group sizes in DE&S and also a consistency with a pattern of group sizes that appear to be evolutionarily led, that of the group of five members which corresponds to Dunbar's concept of the support clique (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 67 ).

The group size of 500-2500 as tribes and mega-bands also corresponds with the primary point at which functional and linguistic differentiation occurred between Naval, Army, RAF, or primarily civilian groups. This appeared to be function or domain led because at this level the groups were functionally different, and had predominantly a different customer, for example, Maritime, or Land Army outputs (DE&S, 2010c). The language differences that existed at this group size in DE&S may be explained by the language of the Army, the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force acting as a differentiator between Operating Centres and Chief of Materiel areas. It is therefore plausible that these factors of group size and language are combined at this boundary of the Operating Centre in DE&S. Dunbar (1993a p 686) also found those same evolutionary stable group sizes in armies which was of particular interest to this thesis because of the proximity of the army physically, psychologically, culturally and organisationally to DE&S.

#### 4.7.11 Legitimised Tribes

**Finding: The concept of the tribe was legitimised in parts of DE&S, but the use of that label was contentious.**

In addition to metaphorical tribes, there were legitimised military tribal networks which originally had the remit to maintain a single service ethos in a Joint Service Environment:

*'It's interesting, we used to have a Tribal Chief. It used to be an expression that we used to apply to a senior naval officer within the organisation who used to look after the naval tribe, so sort of actually recognising us as different because of our parent service. But was perhaps a slightly unfortunate nomenclature because it did perhaps then provide some sort of a framework that cut across the organisational boundaries and the delivery boundaries. But I recognize tribalism going on within the organisation now. And I don't know, my perception was that it's more marked in other areas, I'm sure that's a biased position, and I would say that probably the bits of the organisation that support the RAF were the most tribal, the Army bits coming somewhere behind and the dark blue bits perhaps the most broad. But I'm sure that's a biased position and I'm sure if you asked people of different areas you'd get a different view of that, but that just goes to show that there was demarcation and there was a lack of understanding. And the bits of culture which still exist as we've mentioned from the DPA and the DLO previously were quite strong and these cultural identities were very difficult to break down' (Shaw, 2011h).*

This response is from the Royal Navy Tribal Chief in Operating Centre B. The genesis of the tribal networks scheme belonged to the armed services; the scheme was originally created in order to '*maintain a single service ethos in a joint service environment*'. The most senior military person in each service in Operating Centre B was called the Tribal Chief. It was then realised that the Civil

Service were not covered by this, and so the Civil Service tribal network was created.

The use of the word tribal was thought by group members and also senior members of these groups to reinforce group boundaries through a sense of difference and otherness. In 2010 it was realised that the word 'tribal' carried a certain amount of 'baggage', this mirrors the finding of Cameron and Quinn (1999) with their use of the word 'clan', that they synonymised for 'tribe'.

*'The worst connotations, instantly. I refused to be called the Army Tribal Chief when I got here because I said I'm not chief of any tribalism, I don't do tribalism. We do stuff for the common good not for the good of an individual battalion or company or service it's done for defence. Tribalism for me had connotations to me of those only doing for what's right for in the tribe and not what's right for the common good. And I have heard that in DE&S you get the tribe together. And I disagree entirely, we should stop it. That suggests that there were hidden groupings and a hidden society that was doing things for their benefit and not for the benefit of everybody else. I'm not the head of any tribalism. I'll be a Senior Army Mentor if you want, if that's what it means, but I'm not going to be their only tribal chief...'*  
(Shaw, 2011s).

The worst connotations of the term 'tribal leader' were made clear in this response from the formally recognised tribal chief of the Army, although he preferred to be called the senior mentor. The Brigadier was thinking corporately by looking at the common good, rather than thinking in either a single service way.

The corporate versus the tribal view was also articulated by the Senior Mentor for the Royal Navy:

*'We're not formally tribal chiefs; the term tribe and tribal have been overtaken by events. So we call ourselves, I think, Senior Service Mentors was the currently agreed term to describe the role that certainly the three*

*service people in that setup prefer. And I think there's a tacit understanding that the Civil Service have adopted a similar model as the three services' (Shaw, 2011o).*

The term 'Senior Mentor' was used and the tribal network was rebranded in 2010 to become a mentoring network (DE&S, 2010b). But the existence of this formalised *tribal network* indicates how *tribal behaviour* of the military was reinforced in this part of DE&S and also in its precursor organisation, the DCSA.<sup>68</sup> It was recognised formally because they worked to negate it. Over time, these mentoring groups became more subtle in their reinforcement of the military and civilian groupings. The Civil Service 'tribal' scheme was, from an organisational point of view, intended to develop the mentee, implicitly socio-culturally, to make them a better civil servant in their current position, and also to prepare them for different, often more senior roles. The informant is the Civil Service senior mentor:

*'So shall we start with Civil Service tribe bit? I think you're probably getting the same message from, or you will if you haven't already, but I'm sure you have from the Army, that none of us like the Tribal or the Chief. We view it as counterproductive. The tribe, because it's...there's that sense of being a group that's exclusive to others where we want to be inclusive. And the Chief was too hierarchical and it's not inclusive and embrative or a community sense. The Brigadier's [who is the Senior Army Mentor/Tribal Chief] sense was that the Army and the RAF and the Navy have got a sense of identity, but the Civil Service had less so and I'd like you to look at trying to create this greater sense of community ....because it's not intuitive to me that there's a tribal...there's a tribe here, because there's lots of groups here and compared to the services, if you've talked to the Brigadier...., there's a very powerful reason for why they have the tribe and I wouldn't want to express what he would say but the way that we looked at it in the past was the military tribal chiefs, their role had been to*

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<sup>68</sup> Defence Communications Services Agency.



*help people either on detachment to ISS (Information Systems and Services), away from their main group, the Army or the Navy, because they've often felt a bit left out, undervalued, not kept in contact with what's going on in main service and needing someone to represent them with the manning authorities...*' (Shaw, 2011h).

This interview with the first Civil Service Tribal Leader was conducted just before his retirement from the Civil Service. The existence of the Civil Service tribal scheme appeared that there were hard and recognisable identities for each of the military services, but that the Civil Service did not have that same sense of identity. The existence of the Civil Service tribal scheme may provide part of the answer as to how Civil Service identity was developed in this part of MOD. This response echoes the responses from the other senior mentors, that the labels of tribe and tribalism were negative. Historically, the *tribal networks* had been used to '*maintain a single service ethos in a joint service environment*', thus reinforcing groups boundaries and distinctiveness, primarily of the military and between the military and the civil servants.

As we have seen, this had, over time, been perceived as 'wrong', and since the inception of DE&S the tribal leader identity label and role had been changed to promote a more corporate world-view.

These negative aspects appear to have led to the labelling, and also the ethos, of the *tribal networks* changing to becoming *mentoring organisations*, with the aim of supporting the equality of treatment of military staff, rather than purely preserving a military ethos in a civilian environment.

There were many other changes that occurred in DE&S, but the tribes still appeared to exist as a result of cultural drag from the DPA and the DLO and also from the military (Shaw, 2014e).

## **4.8 Conclusions That Arise From Chapter Four**

Section 4.8 draws some conclusions from the findings that were reported in in Chapter Four. The concept of identity in DE&S was expressed on the person through clothing, lanyards and badges, geographically and also through the corporate use of space as an adjunct to personal and team space as shown in sections 4.3 and 4.4. It was also expressed though group dialects and distinct functional languages that each group possessed as shown in section 4.7

This multi-level and nuanced approach to identity appeared to lead to multiple boundaries being created between Operating Centres, Project Teams, and Role Teams and between members, especially between the uniformed military personnel and the non-uniformed civil servants.

The asymmetric implementation of dress codes between military personnel and civil servants appeared to create tension between the different groups, and between the military culture, of being uniform, and the Civil Service where no uniform was mandated.

This then showed that dress was used to create a negative out-group, which in turn appeared to lead to dress and uniform being used as a proxy to express discontent about changes in terms and conditions in the British Army, with the blame for those changes being put onto civil servants as shown in section 4.3.8.

There appeared to be a trajectory to the manifestation of identities in DE&S that started prior to the creation of DE&S on the 1st of April 2007 when the DPA and the DLO merged (MOD, 2006). This trajectory involved the creation of a 'One DE&S' identity that resulted in tension when the old identities of the DPA and the DLO were removed. At this time, employees appeared not to want or recognise that new identity as shown in sections 4.3.8 and also 4.3.2.

Lanyards were a flexible symbol of identity in the new DE&S but they were not universally accepted, and so lanyards could become a divisive rather a unifying

factor. In addition to lanyards, badges and brooches were used as symbol of identity and these symbols could also be divisive among groups. This division of identity between groups appeared to be exacerbated by the DE&S corporate branding team allowing Operating Centres to develop and retain their own identities. This fragmentation of identity may have been one of the factors that allowed DE&S to be a multi-organisational cultural organisation as shown in sections 4.3.6 and 4.3.7.

The 'One DE&S' identity that was developed at the time of the merger extended through the implementation of corporate branding guidelines. That branding identity extended to labels that indicated the function and location of teams. While these labels were of the same graphical pattern, the language that was used on them was idiosyncratic to the team. This indicated a further split in the corporate identity, as the acronyms that were used on the labels may not have been understood by people outside those groups, thus creating a further group boundary and adding to the group divisions, as opposed to enabling the single identity that was envisaged as shown in section 4.3.3.

Where identity was expressed in relation to group size, it appeared to be a consistent factor during the research that group members identified more strongly with smaller groups, such as their Role Team, than they did with larger ones. They therefore had difficulty in identifying positively with DE&S as it was such a large organisation and many people appeared to be unclear as to its purpose, leading to people delaminating from DE&S. On the other hand team-members could identify positively with their role team or the front line as they were more clear as to the function of those groups; also, within their role team they had formed social relationships and knew more people in that group than they did across DE&S, which may have coloured a member's view of the organisation. This was shown in section 4.5

In addition to the existence of group labels, there was a hierarchy of territorial identity marking that followed the group size hierarchy in DE&S, from corporate,

down to the personal desk level, marking personal space via a series of symbolic and pragmatic artefacts. This was shown in section 4.4.

This marking of territory appeared to act to delineate between groups, both in a pragmatic way, so that by looking at the artefacts and architecture a group member would know where there were, but also in a symbolic way, where a team might use some of their equipment to mark territory. Territory marking thus became another way of creating an in-group and out group was allowed at a corporate and team level. However, at a desk level territory marking was explicitly against DE&S corporate rules, yet it went on. This was shown in section 4.4.1.

The existence of territory marking in this way appears to indicate that the socio-cultural organisation was capable of ignoring and subverting the aims of the socio-technical organisation. That is if people did not want to follow the socio-technical rules, there were ways to avoid them. Their management did not manage the person or the rules effectively or provide appropriate sanctions for not following organisational policy. This was shown in section 4.4.1.

Therefore, the socio-cultural appears to have been more powerful than the socio-technical.

In terms of personal, as opposed to corporate or team level, or geographical identity, the lack of desk space and inequitable treatment of staff could also lead to both super-competitive behaviours between staff over desks and also to a level of staff dis-engagement over not having a desk. This was shown in section 4.4.2.

This appeared to be because people define themselves, and may also be defined by others by where they sit, either in physical terms, or by how close they may sit to other people such as leaders. Position and visibility both, therefore appeared to be culturally significant, reflecting ideas of both power distance.

The flexi-desking policy also appeared to lead to frictions within teams over who is sitting in a particular place, or by who is allowed to use 'that desk'. It appears then that the perceived benefits to the user of flexi-desking such as being able to

have more flexible conversation and build networks with other people, are more difficult to create. Indeed the main benefit of this way of working is apparently biased towards DE&S, the organisation, as opposed to an individual because it can get more people onto the floorplates without having to buy more office space, without realising that the frictional costs are borne by the user. Activities such as spending time finding a desk, or finding the person who 'usually sits there, but isn't there today', wasted in non-productivity (Shaw, 2013s). This was shown in section 4.4.2.

It was apparent in DE&S that when group members were asked with whom they identified with that identity was expressed in two directions in DE&S, that of the organisation as a whole and the Role Team and the front-line.

Also even though there was no clear view of one identity being stronger than another across all grades, it appeared that the strength of identity with the front-line was stronger than was identification with DE&S, as shown in section 4.5.

This indicates that at that time, the concept of the 'One DE&S' identity was not accepted by all group members and it also indicates that there was an ethos in place whereby employees were there to support the 'front line' and that the existence of DE&S appeared to be a necessary evil.

Identity, therefore, formed one element of group distinctiveness in DE&S, enabling group members to create in-groups and out-groups, as a result of naturally occurring and organisationally legitimised social categorisation and fragmentation of the groups.

DE&S was a Project Team organisation and was broken down functionally into a hierarchy of groups. The group sizes that were found in DE&S appeared to closely match those proposed by the evolutionary anthropologist Dunbar (2003 Figure 1), and Hill et al. (2008). Project Teams appeared to follow a linear pattern up to group sizes of 40, with the break points being at groups of 5 members, with the maximum group size of a team falling at between 120 and 140 members, thus

matching closely Dunbar's cognitive maximum for a group and also the base pattern of five members. This was shown throughout section 4.6.

The larger groups in DE&S were observed to be between 500 to 2500 group members. Dunbar labels these group sizes as mega-band (500 members) or tribe (at 1500-2500 members), Dunbar (1993a p 684) (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 67). These numbers coincide with group sizes where linguistic difference is identified in archaic tribes (Dunbar, 1993a p 684) (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 67). And, indeed, in DE&S, linguistic boundaries were observed at the similar sized Operating Centre level, where the Operating Centre is Ships, or Land Equipment based.

There was an additional group size boundary at which language changed. That was within the 1\* level groups of between 150 and 500 which corresponds to Dunbar's label of a clan and mega-band (1993a p 685). Groups of above 160 members were not recognized as teams, being called groups, or when larger, Operating Centres.

Also, it appears that anecdotally, when groups grew to larger than 120 members they became unmanageable, and these group sizes appeared to be comparable with Dunbar's concept of the clan (1993a p 685). It thus appears that evolutionary factors that are associated with the natural formation of groups may have affected the organisational culture of DE&S.

The organisational proximity of the military to the civilians may have influenced structural criteria, such as the design of DE&S organisational structures, and may in turn have had some effect on group behaviour and the organisational culture of DE&S. But on the other hand, because of the similarity and also the consistency of the group sizes in DE&S compared to other organisations, the organisational design process that was used across DE&S and the similarity in the functional group sizes that were identified across DE&S, it may perhaps be the case that organisational design may have been at least influenced by evolutionary factors.

Therefore, with regard to group size in DE&S, through organisational design, DE&S management allowed and legitimised functional group sizes that mirrored the size of groups that people create naturally as social groups. These group sizes appear to have been evolutionarily predicated, and it therefore appears it was unconsciously driven, leading to a cognitive bias towards these group sizes appearing within the organisational design.

Also, the way group members described their groups, and how they related to their group changed depending on the size of the group to which a group member was referring.

This may then have affected the culture and behaviour of the group, and led group members to believe that they were in vernacular *tribes* because of the conjunction of the factors of the identity of the legitimate group sizes, symbols, language and evolutionary factors of the groups that they inhabited. But because these groups possessed those characteristics, they were in fact in para-tribes as described in section 2.7.

Chapter 4 has presented some of the attributes of the groups that were discovered in DE&S. Chapter 5 now presents some observations on the integration of group members into those groups and how that might have affected the organisational culture of DE&S.

## **5 Integration, Dis-integration and Organisational Culture**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 has presented findings, data and analysis on some of the attributes of the groups that were found in DE&S.

Chapter 5 reports the research findings, data and analysis on integration of members as formal induction, informal socialisation, and team-building. It also presents the research findings on cultural drag as defined in section 2.3.

#### **5.1.1 Navigation**

Section 5.2 describes Strand 1: Formal socialisation into groups via 'induction' that was described through DE&S policy. This was primarily a socio-technical integrative practice.

Section 5.3 describes Strand 2: Informal socialisation which appeared to be primarily peer driven.

Section 5.4 describes Strand 3: These were activities that were labelled and characterised throughout DE&S as 'team-building activities'.

Section 5.5 describes some elements of the organisational culture of DE&S. It also describes some of the cultural drag that was observed in DE&S because of a lack of organisational induction into DE&S when it was created.



## 5.2 Strand 1: Induction

### 5.2.1 Introduction

Section 5.2 is structured to show examples of, and discussion of, inductions that were experienced by respondents or observed during the research and also the policy and organisational instruments that formalised induction in DE&S.

### 5.2.2 Induction into DE&S on its Formation in 2007

**Finding:** When DE&S was created, insufficient effort was put into establishing the new DE&S organisational culture, leading to the new culture not breaking away from the old cultures to become distinct from the DLO and DPA organisational cultures.

The following respondent, a C1 grade civil servant was a member of the group that was responsible for managing the formation of DE&S:

*‘now I originally said none, but of course thinking about that there was a lot of...with the formation of DE&S there was a lot of briefings and other events and stuff like that, not formally called induction, but if you want to look at it in the broadest possible sense, that was what it was attempting to do’ (Shaw, 2011p).*

This response showed that there appeared to be only an implied, as opposed to an explicit formal induction for the general population of the DPA and the DLO into DE&S on its inception. A Royal Navy Captain, a Team Leader in Operating Centre E elaborates on what he witnessed at the time of the merger:

*‘And I also did obviously the standard stuff that we all had to do on the formation of the DE&S. Which I have to say was limited and that was something I, certainly, was aware of and felt that they’d done insufficient to establish a new regime within the DE&S... I remember when the DPA formed, and we formed up IPTs [integrated Project Teams] the break-*

*through process was quite a considerable process. It disrupted our business very considerably over a quite a lot of weeks. We spent probably half of our time out of the office over those periods and did actually really make a significant effort and put a significant amount of resource into establishing that new culture which probably led to the success of IPTs because it was a different culture. Whereas when we formed the DE&S, there was a sort of self-help system to monitor your progress, but there wasn't very much ability to do anything positive. There wasn't the resource either in time or money or external assistance provided to do anything other really than change the badges on the day' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The Captain also provided thumbnail sketches of the cultural types, and the manifestations of a lack of organisational change that he had observed while working within the precursor organisations to DE&S. During the interview, he accessed both his old identities and also indicated the existence of a slowness of staff to adjust to the new organisation to explain the process, practice, and shortcomings of staff induction into the new culture of DE&S.

The paucity of induction at the time of the merger of the DPA and the DLO was compared negatively by him to the socio-technical induction, called '*break-through*' that they had experienced at the creation of the DPA.<sup>69</sup>

The experience of this period supports the view of Littlefield (2000), who described the practicalities of the '*break-through*'<sup>70</sup> processes, and also their effect on groups within the DPA.

A common theme that was expressed by informants suggests that induction into DE&S, at the time of the merger appeared to be inconsistently experienced and practised, it was also often not recognized as induction either technically or

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<sup>69</sup> 1 April 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Break-through was the jargon word for inducting teams in to the construct of the DPA. It was used to develop an ethos and socio-technical culture for the DPA that enabled group members to be distinct from the DLO and other organisations because it brought group members into the concept of the Integrated Project Team, the IPT.

socially. For example, a C2 civil servant in Operating Centre G: *'DE&S held some induction interviews, sorry, presentations'* (Shaw, 2011m) reinforces the view that induction into DE&S at that time was implied rather than explicit.

These perspectives of the experience of the socialisation of group members into DE&S when it was created in 2007 are all consistent and encapsulate themes that were found throughout the responses. They also show that, throughout DE&S, induction into DE&S from the DPA and the DLO at the time of the merger was inconsistent. It appears then that the inconsistent experience of the induction of group members who were in the DPA and the DLO, and were merged into DE&S on its creation, may have also have been a reason for the slow pace of change from the old to the new in DE&S. In terms of practice, induction into DE&S at the time of the merger was directed predominantly at 1\* level and above, where DE&S was designed to that level, and described in organisational diagrams. Below 1\* level, it was left to the discretion of the 1\* leaders to describe, build and induct their own organisations as they saw fit. In Operating centre A, for example, there was no work carried out below the 1\* level to induct people into DE&S as at that time it was thought that *'everyone was too busy to take part'* (Shaw, 2007-2010).

The organisational culture of DE&S at that time appeared to be viewed by respondents as a monolithic construct, because there existed the expressed concept of 'One DE&S'. The political ethos that had been given to DE&S prior to its inception was only one indicator of this new culture. Political and functional elements formed the socio-technical axis of the DE&S organisational culture.

But neither of the required culture changes occurred in the way that was expected. What happened was that through DE&S allowing multiple organisational cultures to persist from the DPA and the DLO and also where Operating Centres were allowed their own identities, a fractured, multi-organisational cultural DE&S appeared to arise, instead of the 'One DE&S'. The primary cultures of the DLO and the DPA became subsumed within a weak

overarching DE&S organisational culture. One of the reasons for this occurring appeared to be because of the lack of induction into DE&S at the time of the merger.

It should be noted here that, in the DPA, all induction activity that occurred at levels above the Role Team level was stopped in 2006 (Shaw, 2006) as a result of the preparations for the merger with the DLO to form DE&S. At that time it was thought that induction would not be useful into an organisation that would only be in existence for 12 months (Shaw, 2007b).

It was therefore the case that on vesting day 2007 when DE&S officially came into being, there was no formal induction into DE&S, and therefore the only changes that were apparent to staff was symbolic, rather than pragmatic. These were, for example, a new flag, letterheads and lanyards, all of which were as a result of the imposition of a DE&S branding policy DE&S (2012). The imposition of symbolic identities did not necessarily mean that there would be a change of behaviour within the organisation. In fact, it appears that a negative effect resulted from the imposition of new identities onto group members. It also appears that there was very little immediate change in personal or group behaviours in DE&S, as a result of people not being socialised into the new culture of DE&S.

It was not until 2009, two years after the creation of DE&S that a corporate DE&S PowerPoint™ presentation induction (DE&S, 2009c) was created as a result of DE&S policy (DE&S, 2009d), it was a further two years before induction policy was refreshed in 2011 (DE&S, 2011b).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Until 2013 there was no other induction at a DE&S level. This new level of induction was created in response to the hiring of approximately 1500 new staff as part of the 'interim structures' programme for DE&S. The research does not discuss the utility of this induction.

It is because of this lack of general policy that sections 5.23 and 5.2.4 describe induction of specific groups and situations, and not through the eyes of a general member of staff.

### **5.2.3 Formal Induction Policy In DE&S**

**Finding: DE&S had an organisational policy on induction into teams and other groups, and expected people to be inducted into those groups and into their role.**

Formal induction in DE&S was set out through policy rules and guidance (DE&S, 2009d, DE&S, 2009c, DE&S, 2011b). The induction policy described a series of outcomes, one of which was that DE&S expected induction of new group members to be completed within 6 weeks of them joining DE&S:

***“Departmental: MOD Induction – All new entrants to MOD to complete within 2 weeks of joining.***

***Organisational: DE&S – to be completed by all new entrants to DE&S within 6 weeks of joining.***

***Team Level: (includes local site briefings) – to be completed on taking up appointment.***

***Line Management: – on taking up appointment,”.***

This policy indicates that DE&S required group members to achieve role competence and technical and professional proficiency within a comparatively short time (DE&S, 2009d Section 3, DE&S, 2011b). Thus it would appear that one meaning of the value of induction to DE&S was of the new group member becoming functionally competent as quickly as possible. This outcome appears to confirm the socio-technical nature of induction in DE&S.

There was no evidence of how this role competence was measured. For example, it would have been useful to know, as a manager, how much the

newcomer understood about their new role and how effectively they were able to perform it after, for example, one month and then six months into a new post.

Instead of this, induction at all levels in DE&S included evaluation purely as a process adherence measure. This was also carried out by the inductee's manager in a Role Team using checklists to ensure that the mandated induction activities had been carried out, for example, '*a check list of activities to undertake e.g. shared area, processes, fire alarm etc, and groups/ individual introductions*' (Shaw, 2011ad).

Throughout formal induction practice in DE&S, the measurement of induction was achieved through a discussion between the new group member and their line manager of the process of new group member's induction and progress in the group. It was therefore a subjective measurement. If induction policy was adhered to, the new group member would answer the questions that were contained within the induction presentation (DE&S, 2009c), but it was observed that the cultural norm in many Operating Centres in relation to induction was that the asking of questions and the gathering of feedback was often ignored (Shaw, 2012j) This then appeared to lead to feelings that formal induction was not valued as an organisational process in DE&S.

#### **5.2.4 Levels of Induction into DE&S**

**Finding: There were different levels of induction that coincided with the hierarchical position of the group.**

There were inductions into DE&S as staff, induction into DE&S as graduates and apprentices, and there was a separate process for military personnel. Examples of these are now presented, starting with the induction into DE&S. Induction practice varied from group to group in DE&S, and also by the hierarchical position of the induction, whether it was at an Operating Centre Level, a Project team, or a Role Team induction.

The induction into DE&S as an organisation was a PowerPoint™ presentation that was expected to be read by the group member at their desk.

In contrast, the induction into the Abbeywood site was a formal presentation given by subject matter experts (Shaw, 2010I). Induction practice into Role Teams was diverse. For example, even within one Operating Centre, the following responses show differences in approach:

*‘Induction pack, introduction to team, familiarisation walk of the site and a buddy, from what I can recall all very helpful. Also a check list of all mandatory training and induction events that I needed to complete which was reviewed after a month’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

*‘Introduction to team members, H&S,<sup>72</sup> tour of area, using computer. I was given a welcome pack and introduced to the team on my first day. My line manager also took me through various site information’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

*‘A check list of activities to undertake e.g. shared area,<sup>73</sup> processes, fire alarms etc. and groups/ individual introductions’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

*‘E-pack describing all the parts of the organisation, where I fitted in and detailing email addresses, phone numbers etc’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

*‘Shown around floorplate, introduced to team and shown around compound and shown fire escapes and assembly points, introduced to the team’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

*‘Mandatory training, fire procedures team member introductions, shown the weapon I support and given a detailed description of how it functions through videos and shown videos of weapon in use’* (Shaw, 2011ad).

It appears, therefore, that even within a single Operating Centre there were multiple interpretations of DE&S policy. It appears also that Role Team induction

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<sup>72</sup> Health and Safety.

<sup>73</sup> Electronic Information storage area.

in that Operating Centre appeared to be congruent with technical policy, had utility, and was meaningful to those who experienced it, even though the individual teams carried out the process and practice differently. In terms of timescales, induction and integration in Role Teams appeared to be carried out within the first week of a new member joining the group.

Role Team induction in DE&S might therefore be characterised as providing the following benefits: basic technical knowledge of the organisational rules at that level, of the team, the development of close, working level relationships that sustain good team work. Role Team induction also appeared to provide knowledge to the job-holder of how they should perform their role, and for the Line Manager, knowledge that the new group member could perform their role, and for the team, trust that the new group member would fit in technically with the team. There appears to be no information about how, or the effort made, to integrate a new group member into their new team socially.

### **5.2.5 Graduate and Cohort Based Entry Schemes**

**Finding: Graduate entry schemes were viewed by scheme members as being inconsistent in their approach to induction into DE&S, in doing so they appeared to engender expectations mis-match.**

In total, five randomised interviews were carried out with members or recent ex-members of graduate or apprentice entry schemes to DE&S.

*‘All of my pre-conceptions were completely wrong. I was fairly convinced that the MOD. I knew exactly what they wanted out of their graduate trainees. And then when I joined it took me approximately two months to realise that all of my preconceptions about how things were run were completely wrong and in fact nobody really knew what they were doing. Here I am, I’ve jumped through all these hoops, I’ve just joined up and now they don’t necessarily know what to do with me and indeed I don’t know what I’m meant to be doing either’ (Shaw, 2011h).*



We see in the response from this graduate that an expectations mis-match was realised between the new entrant and their expectation of DE&S, and recognized within two months of crossing the boundary and joining DE&S. This negative experience of the induction of graduates was not unique:

*‘...It was a graduate induction; we spent one week in a conference centre in Bath and another sort of team-building week, so that was very good. But it wasn’t delivered by DE&S, so it wasn’t a DE&S induction. It was a MOD [graduate scheme<sup>74</sup>] induction’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

Also,

*‘When I first joined DE&S I’m sure that there was a health and safety, do this course, fill in this form to register for this, but not particularly about what DE&S was as an organisation. Because it was assumed that had been covered on the graduate induction’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

But this was also an induction into MOD, not into DE&S, which appeared to differ from the expectations of this informant. Further confirmation of the inconsistency of induction practice on graduate schemes was provided by the following graduate informant, in Operating Centre G:

*‘...We were met at the reception by one of the people that we’d dealt with in the past. We’d been here for a [MOD] pre-induction, so we’d signed the Official Secrets Act so we knew...we recognized faces, you don’t really remember names, it was a bit of a foul up really because of people not turning up and there were guys there on day one and, you know, where’s my boss, so a lot of running around and sorting that out, so that kind of...I thought it’d be a bit more organised than that...’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

This interviewee related the same themes as the previous graduate entrants, but they were a member of the commercial graduate scheme, rather than the

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<sup>74</sup> Scheme anonymised.

engineering graduates' scheme. This indicates that there was a consistency across graduate schemes that induction was inconsistent and not as good as it was expected to be. Once again, there was a MOD induction, but no DE&S induction. This indicates that there was a consistency in the lack of induction into DE&S across the different graduate entry schemes. It also appears that, for the first informant, there was no direction as a new group member as to what 'they', meaning that he, and his Line Manager, were supposed to be doing in terms of integrating him into the team, either socio-culturally or socio-technically:

*'The first placement, I don't know if you're familiar with the way [the scheme] runs or the placement structure, you're brought in to do a series of six placements over a period of two years. Though in practice you can extend some of them to about six months and therefore maybe do a minimum of four placements. They pick the first one for you based on an engineering systems anchor, or ESA, and mine was [an area]. And they put me into the [team name]. Immediately I got on very well with the team itself, very friendly chaps, but I think the real problem I had was I didn't really know what I was meant to be doing. I wasn't given very good direction as to what my intended sort of outcomes, my roles and responsibilities were meant to be. I couldn't look to the [the scheme] training office for help on this; they didn't know. I couldn't really look to the people I was working with for help on this because they too weren't necessarily sure what to do with me. So for three months I picked up work here and there, but felt very adrift I think in the organisation' (Shaw, 2011j).*

This respondent was expecting a trajectory of placements, but because the people managing him into the team did not know what to do with him, he did not receive the integration that he was expecting. Expectations mis-match between graduates and DE&S also appeared to occur where MOD used actors in the graduate assessment exercises instead of real civil servants:

*‘The assessment centre was set up in such a way that you got a very professional image of the employees of DE&S and the MOD, but of course I was later told that was because the people they employ to do the employment assessment centre were actors working off a script’ (Shaw, 2011j).*

It therefore appears that the expectation that this graduate had developed from the initial contact with the Graduate Entry Scheme on pre-socialisation was that it would result in MOD knowing *‘exactly what they wanted people to do’*. (Shaw, 2011j). This statement was engendered by both the reputation of MOD and through the quality of the pre-socialisation material, because the Graduate Entry Scheme was in the top 10 for Engineering Employers and also *‘got a very professional image of the employer, MOD’* (Shaw, 2011j). But the *employees* at the assessment centre were not real employees, they were actors (Shaw, 2013t). MOD might therefore be said to be creating a false impression in order to attract applicants.

Two of the graduate informants were members of the Engineering Graduates Scheme, but who worked in different Operating Centres. Their experiences appear to corroborate the existence of several things: a specific graduate induction, a temporal boundary and inconsistency in the application and experience of the technical induction, and the fact that it was only an induction into the MOD, there was no induction into DE&S.

It therefore appears then that graduate induction schemes could be inconsistent in their induction of graduates into DE&S, because of what appears to be a lack of consistent application of DE&S policy by DE&S staff, whereas induction into the MOD which was part of the graduate schemes appears to be successful.

It could be said that graduate induction was consistent in its inconsistency, each group carried out induction consistently in their own way, but the different systems were not harmonised.

**Finding: In addition to graduate entry schemes, there were also apprentice entry schemes and these schemes appeared to be inconsistent in their approach to induction.**

*'I don't think it was quite substantial enough because there was a steep learning curve, learning things like how to do travel bookings and holidays. There's a lot to learn just about how to work here... but we had a week spent having health and safety briefs, getting to know other apprentices'* (Shaw, 2011h).

The example provides a differing view of induction, and appears to chime with the general theme that was expressed by the graduate entrants. It was provided by an apprentice entrant to DE&S, working in Operating Centre D. Apprentice inductions involved a longer period of socio-technical formal induction than graduate schemes, but it still appeared to be insufficient for new group members to understand the functional rules within DE&S, such as, for example, booking leave.

Apprentices also spent time getting to know other apprentices, thus building relationships within the group, which helped to build a cadre of apprentices that possessed a degree of coherence and identity as a group that was separate to their Operating Centres and Role Teams. But even then, this respondent said later that he did not think that this induction was quite '*substantial enough*'. (Shaw, 2011h). This response adds weight to the conclusion that technical induction for graduates and also apprentices was inconsistent across all schemes, breaking down when they left their graduate entry scheme induction to join DE&S.

The elapsed time of a week for a formal induction mentioned by this respondent chimes with many other responses about the length of time that new group members were given to be formally inducted into groups. This time of a week provides further evidence of a boundary between formal induction finishing and informal socialisation and integration practice within DE&S taking precedence.

The boundary differs to DE&S policy, because DE&S induction was expected to take a month to complete. This shows further inconsistency in the practice and experience of formal socio-technical induction in DE&S.

There was also at this time up to a 50% attrition rate from graduates leaving those schemes (Shaw, 2012c). This attrition rate seems from the interview material to be related to the expectations mis-match between the individual graduate and the corporate DE&S (Shaw, 2012c). These responses correspond to the findings of (Garavan and Morley, 1997, Scholarios et al., 2003) and others, where expectations of graduate entrant to organisations have not been met, .

It then appears from the data provided, that the formal induction of civilians and graduates into DE&S and its teams was inconsistently practised and experienced. If it was good, it was very good and was meaningful to those that experienced it, however, if it was not good it was likely to be negatively received by inductees. The result of this may have been that new group members may not have felt welcome in their new teams, and they also may have felt that they could not perform their new role as well as their manager, or their peers would have liked them to perform it.

### 5.2.6 Induction and Integration of Military Personnel into DE&S

Military personnel formed approximately 10% of DE&S staff and when they joined DE&S from military establishments as part of the posting cycle they were also subject to a form of induction and socialisation into DE&S which was specific to them.

**Finding: The entry of military personnel in DE&S differed from the entry of civilians.**

The entry of military personnel into DE&S differed from the entry of civilians, in that military personnel expected, and normally received, a multi-day handover from the previous incumbent of the post that they were taking up.

The following example shows the experience of a Foreign Liaison Officer, in Operating Centre D:

*'There was no internal [DE&S] induction programme once I'd turned up either. So what I had was a three or four day handover takeover from the previous guy, so he ran me through a few presentations specific to the job I was going into' (Shaw, 2011h).*

Whilst this expectation of a formal handover was not always met, the temporal boundary that existed between formal induction as socio-technical practice and the informal socialisation as socio-cultural practice across DE&S was consistent within the data. This boundary appeared at approximately five working days from when the new group member arrived in their new group. Induction of military personnel into DE&S was likely to come from within the Operating Centre or role team that they were joining, and, because it was ad-hoc, this induction could be seen as being inconsistent because of the process and practice that was applied:

*'I mean I did and I didn't [receive an induction]. I had a three or four day handover; we spent a day at the IPT (Integrated Project Team), I did a manager's technical course, but I wouldn't...depends what you mean by*

*induction, there was an arrival procedure [the JSAU process]' (Shaw, 2011h).*

*'...I [the new group member]... was given an ad hoc induction by team members. It consisted of: 3 x A4 pages of key points from a subordinate, an A4 lever arch with 'useful' reading material, [Operating Centre] Plan, copies of old [PowerPoint] briefs, introduction by key personalities, admin..' (Shaw, 2011ad).*

These examples of the induction of military personnel show the consistency of a temporal boundary, the length of time that the induction took place over, and also the practice within military-to-military post handovers.

The experience shown here was similar to that experienced by the following respondent. They also experienced a *'three or four day handover with [their] predecessor'* (Shaw, 2011h). This respondent was relatively senior, an RAF Group Captain, leading a team in Operating Centre F.

It might be presumed that at this level of seniority the respondent would be expected to, as expressed in the vernacular of DE&S, *'be thrown in at the deep end'*, which means not having any induction. But that was not what he expected. He expected a 'proper induction', but it appears that all military personnel who were new to DE&S were *'just get on with the job,'* as they were military.

This lack of induction may have led to military personnel feeling as though they were not really part of DE&S and welcome there and as will be shown in section 5.5 it may have been a factor in enabling some elements of military culture being carried over into the civilian environment of DE&S.

**Finding: Expectations development and mis-match was present in Military personnel who joined DE&S.**

Interviewer-*'Did you have any expectations of DE&S or your team before you arrived here?'*

*'...I expected to find an organisation or a bunch of people that I worked with that did the bare minimum, work to rule, were led by the unions, were under the cosh of the unions and weren't really interested about output, weren't really interested about what was going on, it was very much a career to get the pension and off they would go at the end of it. That's what I expected to find from a very naive point of view'* (Shaw, 2011n).

The response from a Major in the British Army, in his first tour of duty in DE&S at Abbeywood, shows that where there were negative expectations of DE&S that had developed prior to the person joining DE&S, then those pre-conceptions might not be challenged immediately on their arrival. In extremis, the person could leave DE&S having not been formally integrated into the culture of Abbeywood.

It could take many months to change these expectations, or as shown by Yardley and Neal (2007) in their study of military leadership in Defence acquisition, as much as a whole tour of duty.

The Major indicates that he was expecting to find a stereotype of both a civilian civil servant and also of the unions. In his response, we see the formation of 'us' and 'them', an example of social categorisation in action (Tajfel, 1979, Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The Major also espoused in the above interview, the implied positive and negative stereotype, where 'we', (the military), *'were the only ones interested in output'* (Shaw, 2011n) whereas 'they' (civil servants), were only interested in the pension. In an element of self-reflection, he recognized that this was a 'naïve view' (Shaw, 2011n) with the implication at this early stage of his



posting in DE&S that this reaction was incorrect and also embedded in a somewhat negative view of the civil service.

His response was an expression of his expectations. He was expecting to encounter a culture which included a set of behaviours that were linked to output and reward, described in the response as 'the pension'.

The Major's expectations had not been met, but in a positive rather than a negative sense. He described two factors that explicitly led to the development of his view of DE&S and the civil servants there, the organisation, and also the people, referring to both the socio-technical and the socio-cultural elements of DE&S. In order to refine his response a subsequent question was asked.

*'Interviewer', 'so what have you found?':*

*'I've found an organisation [DE&S], and the people I work with are incredibly professional, hardworking individuals who genuinely see the need of what they're doing and would go that extra mile where others perhaps wouldn't. I think they're really a genuinely good bunch of people that I work with here. It comes from our background in the Army. You see, you only ever hear bad stories and the only thing that ever comes out from somewhere like this was how badly they've performed and how they haven't provided equipment and so you automatically... [see them in a negative way]' (Shaw, 2011n).*

His response identified the reality that he had found, and also identified the locus of the creation of 'the other' which was developed as a result of him being from a different culture, that of the British Field Army.

The response appeared to indicate that he had been affected by something which had not been challenged immediately on his entry to DE&S, because he had not received a formal induction into DE&S, or to his team. That something was the effect of his old culture on moving into the new culture of DE&S. This is confirmed by his next response: *'you're a product of your experience aren't you? So you*

*automatically base your thought processes and what you're going to find, on your experience'*(Shaw, 2011n).

The Major acknowledges that his world view had been shaped by his experience in the British Army, and by what he had been told and heard. Therefore his response appears to indicate that he had been affected by pre-socialisation through peer agency, before he came to DE&S, rather than him receiving any formal, organisationally legitimised pre-socialisation. He admitted that his experience was no different to that of anyone else within his previous group, his regiment in the British Army.

The un-met expectations of military personnel were further shown by a Squadron Leader:

*'...My expectations of DE&S? I didn't really know because I have no experience in DE&S in the 12 years I've been in the [Royal] Air Force. I've never worked in this environment [DE&S]. My expectations were I had a lot to learn, which was true, but I also expected to be trained, which had not happened. You feel completely unwanted and it's not just the lack of training, induction'* (Shaw, 2011w).

The fact that military respondents had un-met expectations resembles the responses from graduate and apprentice scheme entrants that were discussed earlier. This shows that the expectations of military personnel joining a group in DE&S were no different to those of civilians. A consequence of the lack of induction, desk sharing and other territorial behaviours, and also of un-met expectations, may have been that military personnel were unlikely to be fully integrated emotionally or culturally into their new group, even though they might try to self-integrate into their new group.

This could lead to new group members feeling excluded from groups and *not fitting in*, and as a result, actively dis-identifying with the group of which they were a new member. This apparent lack of cultural integration appeared to affect both

civil servants and military personnel, with the likelihood that people were not integrating well into their teams:

*'We're made to feel like a nuisance because we move around every 18 months to 24, which I understand is difficult for somebody who's working on a team and they've been here for five years and they understand it and when I get replaced they then have to bring my replacement up to speed, but the reason they come in is that they have the up to date knowledge of operations and how this aircraft is going to be used. So there's a reason for it, but I feel that's kind of glossed over and actually we're just a nuisance. Unless you're going to stay for three or four years'* (Shaw, 2011w).

This tension and inappropriate behaviour appears to be a low-level form of cultural drag. Even though military personnel expected and received a Role Team induction which was socio-technical in nature, they often received no formal induction into Abbeywood, or DE&S. They did, however, experience a military personnel specific arrivals process.

**Finding: Military personnel received a specific welcome into DE&S Abbeywood that was not an induction. This was designed to maintain their military privileges.**

On arrival at Abbeywood, military personnel were directed to go to the Joint Services Administration Unit (JSAU) DE&S (2010a) to be booked into the site.

*'...Abbeywood Admin doc produced by the JSAU, [Joint Services Administration Unit] a formal 'welcome' & 'overarching' interview with superior Reporting Officer, Site orientation' (Shaw, 2011ad).*

The JSAU arrivals process was a geographically specific practice for military personnel who were posted to DE&S, and specifically into Abbeywood. It was a purely *life support* function for military personnel. Military personnel received information about military specific training and the medical centre. These were facilities that were available to military personnel only, showing a further degree of differentiation between military and civilian staff.

The JSAU was not an induction into DE&S because it only enabled military personnel to understand how they could access their military privileges and life support culture when in the civilian environment of Abbeywood. They did not receive a socio-cultural induction into Abbeywood at the point in time of joining DE&S. The JSAU arrivals process provided detailed information about what military personnel would meet and need when they joined DE&S, thus meeting some specific military socio-cultural needs.

It provided some socio-technical, but primarily, socio-cultural continuity for military personnel in Abbeywood, allowing them to access and maintain their service ethos while at Abbeywood. It did not, however, fully integrate them into the socio-cultural life of Abbeywood. Therefore the JSAU appeared to reinforce the 'us' of the Armed Services through military personnel being treated differently to civilian personnel. The existence of the JSAU and this promotion of difference between the military and civilian staff was formalised by DE&S and the MOD

(DE&S, 2010a), and became a contributing factor that perpetuated the persistence military cultural traits in DE&S. It was thus a further indication that the organisational culture of DE&S was multi-cultural, with a single ethos, but with potentially conflicting loyalties of members within those cultures.

The legitimised and required experience of the JSAU arrivals process reinforced the military identity as opposed to developing or reinforcing a pan-DE&S identity or culture, thus indicating once again the multi-cultural nature of DE&S.

### **5.2.7 Summary**

The research has shown that induction within DE&S into the technical, role based organisation, and also into DE&S on its creation, was inconsistently practised and experienced. This led to high levels of cynicism amongst group members, and contributed to them identifying negatively towards DE&S. Where, however, socio-technical induction was positively experienced, the group member was more likely to identify positively with their role team and with DE&S.

The practice of organisationally legitimised socio-technical induction was completed within 4-6 weeks of a new member joining their team, therefore producing a temporal boundary, at which point DE&S deemed the group member to be fully inducted and able to perform their role duties, even though the new group member may not have felt totally competent.

This thesis will now discuss informal socialisation as socio-cultural integration.

## **5.3 Strand 2: Informal Socialisation**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

Section 5.3 describes the informal or socio-cultural integration that took place after the socio-technical induction was deemed to have been completed

The narrative of the socialisation of new group members into groups in DE&S has thus far been relatively linear, because formal induction into groups occurred as a direct result of DE&S policy within a specified time. The discussion of informal socialisation is much more nuanced, because there was no over-arching organisational drive, resources, or goal that could be shown to formally legitimise its practice.

While formal socio-technical induction in DE&S may have encompassed social and cultural learning, it did so implicitly. The new group member was expected to have assimilated the socio-cultural learning, rather than having what might be termed a formal curriculum with learning outcomes, such as the case with the socio-technical induction of DE&S.

However, informal socialisation occurred within teams, and it was therefore implicitly legitimised by DE&S. Analysis of the ethnographic and interview data led to the identification of two boundaries within the practice and experience of socialisation in DE&S.

The first boundary was a boundary between technical induction and socio-cultural integration, the second was a temporal boundary that existed between socio-technical induction and socio-cultural integration, which this research describes as personal cultural adjustments.

### 5.3.2 Meet the Team

**Finding: Socio-cultural integration could occur in a group setting in conjunction with formal business.**

In DE&S, informal socialisation integrated a new group member into the unwritten rules and social norms of the group. It also introduced the new group member to the personalities and foibles of the other group members: the socio-cultural elements of the group (Shaw, 2007b). This was in contrast to the practice of formal induction of new group members which, as previously shown in section 5.2, was explicitly designed to enable a new group member to perform their work role effectively.

In terms of successful socialisation practice, in order to become integrated into a new team, as described by Chao et al. (1994), and also Chen and Klimoski (2003) information had to be exchanged between the team and the new group member, and vice versa. This exchange often occurred during formally arranged meetings (Shaw, 2010i), and there was a particular trajectory of information content that was present within this type of socialisation meeting.

The trajectory was often as follows, while the information exchanged was contextually and situationally dependent. In informal socialisation, the information was initially predominantly social, that is, information about the personalities within the new group and about a group's social identity.

This example describes a typical first meeting of the new group member with their new team who would often be arranged specially for the purpose. The information flow during this interchange was, as described by Dean (1984), bi-directional, that is between the team and the team member and vice versa.

The format of the meeting often followed a pattern. The Team Leader (or meeting leader if the Team Leader was not present), would firstly welcome everyone and also the new group member or members (Shaw, 2010-2014). They would say a little about the role of the team. Following this, the meeting leader would then do

what was called in the vernacular, *death by introduction*, where they would then ask everyone present to introduce themselves with a little personal information, and to introduce their role in the team. This may have been carried out completely formally or it may have included humorous allusions to what people *really do* in the team, such as 'general cook and bottle washer'. The new group member, when it was their turn, would then be asked to say a little about themselves.

When the round-table activity had been completed, any other group members were likely to be introduced in absentia by the team leader, or perhaps by the absentee team member's line-manager. The information content of the meeting now changed because at this point the meeting became more socially focussed, with the discussion moving towards a more relaxed conversation between group members. The effect of this was that the new group member received information about the formal group and also implicitly received information about the group members' personalities and behaviours, such as whether the group was generally happy or not through the level and type of banter that was exchanged.

The new group member would also start to learn the dialect and linguistic characteristics of the new group. As the discussion in the meeting moved on, the information that was exchanged then changed again from being social information to being functional information describing the tasks and roles that group members had within that group and the wider organisation. (Shaw, 2007-2010).

The information exchanged in these meetings appeared to also function as a group coherence mechanism in a similar way to that described by for example Foster and Rosnow (2006), Levin and Arluke (1987), Luna et al. (2013), Michelson and Mouly (2000), Paine (1967), Slade (1995), and Wert and Salovey (2004b). This pattern of social and functional conversation switching was observed to occur within many formal group interactions and meetings.



In addition to the outcome-based differences, it was observed that in DE&S informal socialisation was practised and experienced more frequently than formal induction as it occurred when it was needed rather than conforming to bureaucratic programmed requirements. It could happen as often as weekly, daily or even hourly if required. Informal socialisation was also performed through small acts of kindness, such as an established group member seeing that a new group member was looking lost or confused, and actively engaging them in conversation and helping them.

Other ways in which a new group member might be socialised into their new group included buying the new group member a drink at the coffee shop, or making them a drink at the kitchen area and introducing them to the tea club (Shaw, 2007-2010).

Actions such as giving eye contact as described by Argyle and Dean (1965), and also Kleinke (1986) to a new group member were also observed to be inclusive socialisation activities that indicated whether a new group member was being welcomed or shunned by the new group. If these responses were lacking then a new group member could feel unwanted, as is shown the experience of an RAF Squadron Leader:

*‘...so Commercial sit in the same place and they talk to themselves and it’s very difficult to even get a ‘good morning’ sometimes, which I find incredible having come from a sort of military unit where if you walk past somebody in the street you say ‘good morning’ on camp and here it’s very different, you don’t...there’s no eye contact..’* (Shaw, 2011w).

Their experience illustrates the combined factors of geographical identity and the closing ranks of one group against another which in this case occurred within Operating Centre C. The existence of this type of incident, and the regularity with which it appeared to happen in DE&S indicated that induction as a practice should encompass the team into which a new group member was moving, as well as the

new team member, thus ensuring that the team made physical and psychological space for the new member.

The Squadron Leader's response also points to the difference in culture and behaviour between the RAF and the Civil Service, thus illustrating one of the unseen barriers between the military and Civil Service, which could lead to tension between military and civilian staff.

In addition, if the group member was joining a new Operating Centre or a Project Team, they might be given a lanyard that identified them as being of that team or a wider group that was related to their team (see section 4.3.5). These artefacts, and the information that they received at this time formed an element of the new group member's integration into both the functional and the social cultures of the group.

**Finding: Informal socialisation into teams was not purely technical or social, but was often a combination of both.**

In DE&S there were other integrative practices that were not purely functional or purely social. One of these was called '*sitting with Nelly*'. This was where the new group member would be assigned a person to sit with and who would teach the new member the ropes:

*'And that's it, they're [the new group member] inducted into the organisation according to the organisation and they're still swimming around. And then what happens was that an informal induction takes over where you [the new group member] sit by Nelly and you learn stuff, or you ask Nelly a question and she'll give her view of how you do it, which was not necessarily the way that the organisation wants you to do it.....so you immediately end up with a divergence and a latency, almost, in behaviour and in some places it can be very obvious and very dangerous to do that.'*  
(Shaw, 2011q).

*'Sitting with Nelly'* appeared to fulfil both a functional induction, by teaching the newcomer how to carry out specific tasks, and also social integration through the newcomer learning how to function within both the group's socio-technical rules and socio-cultural norms.

That socio-cultural learning appeared to occur primarily because the new group's social culture and the details of the new group member's working relationship with their peers appeared not to be passed on to the new group member through the formal induction. *'Sitting with Nelly'* could also produce a conflict between the socio-technical corporate rules and the socio-cultural *'way we do things round here'*, thus showing the tension between the enforcement of the socio-technical and the pragmatic and the occasionally subversive nature of the socio-cultural.

This contradiction within *'sitting with Nelly'* may have appeared to be because the information that was conveyed during the peer to peer transaction might not necessarily be the information that DE&S, or the Role Team, wanted to be communicated. As a consequence, the new group member might behave in ways that were contradictory to the new group's ways of working until they had learned better.

As the new group member learned the new group norms they gained entry to the group through exposure to in-jokes or conversations. This entry into the behind the scenes area of the group allowed the new group member to see, as described by Goffman (1959), the internal performance of the group. It also allowed the new group member to be seen as someone who was *'one of us'* via the acceptance of the person that they were working with. They would then be integrated into the group informally via trust.

### 5.3.3 Food and integration – a Consistent Theme

**Finding: informal socialisation often occurred in conjunction with food.**

Another element in the practice of socialisation within DE&S was the conjunction of socialisation with food. The following examples firstly show socialisation in relation to the phenomenon of '*Fat Boys Friday's*' breakfasts. These events are where a group of team members would go as a defined group to the restaurant and have a group breakfast on Friday mornings between 8 am and 10 am. Friday breakfasts differed from normal breakfasts in that there were more items on the menu. These events were a cultural element of working at Abbeywood and were used with a more casual dress code was in place on Fridays, to mark the transition between the working week and the weekend.

The participating groups were observed to walk along the floor-plate on the way to the restaurant, gathering people up as they moved along by signalling to specific people who were either part of the group, or who were accepted by the in-group.

The following would be a typical call to breakfast between 8.30 and 10 am on Friday mornings on floor-plates in Abbeywood:

*'Person A. "Who's coming to breakfast then?"*

*Person B "Not me too busy, sorry",*

*Person A "what about you?"*

*Person C "Yep, I'll join you let me lock this PC and I'll follow you"' (Shaw, 2007c)*

Breakfasts were available every day of the week in Abbeywood, but on Fridays the breakfast took on a significantly different meaning and it became more of a team social event. DE&S legitimised Friday breakfasts by providing a full breakfast in the Abbeywood restaurants on a Friday. The socialisation practices

that occurred in conjunction with food appeared to reinforce small group and team identities and in DE&S they appeared to be predominantly, although not exclusively, socio-cultural in nature.

An example of combined socio-cultural and socio-technical coherence in this way is provided here. Operating Centre C had a monthly 'Big Breakfast' that had formal elements, such as regular awards for exemplary business practice or behaviour, or successes, but which also acted as a social occasion. (Shaw, 2009e)

'*Fat Boys Friday*' breakfasts appeared to have several effects: they acted to socialise new members of the group into the group's culture, to socio-culturally re-socialise existing members into the group and reinforce group identity, and they also appeared to promote group coherence.

The sizes of the groups that took part in these '*Fat Boys Fridays*' as discrete groups were observed to range predominantly between 3 and 12 people (Shaw, 2008c). An exception was The 'Big Breakfast' group in Operating Centre C which was larger, numbering several hundred in total, but within that number the teams and social groups could be seen as smaller groupings. .

'*Fat boys Friday*' breakfasts were the Friday morning activity for many of the Abbeywood teams.<sup>75</sup> Teams tended to breakfast together, sometimes involving other people from different role teams on their local floor-plate, and at other times friends from farther afield. The conversations at Friday breakfasts followed the same pattern as described previously in relation to meetings, moving from social topics to functional topics and back again seamlessly. This pattern is described by an experienced Team Leader, a Commodore, in Operating Centre G:

*' Conversation at these breakfasts was varied, it can be as mundane as what people were doing at the weekend, or it can be conversations about role based activity that were easier to conduct in that informal environment,*

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<sup>75</sup> And on other MOD sites.

*letting off steam about something that had happened.... the conversation moves between work and leisure' (Shaw, 2011q).*

The discussion was of socio-technical role and related work subjects, and the making sense of the pressures of work combined with gossip, such as *'what are you doing at the weekend? How are the kids?'* It appears that Friday breakfasts were part of the embedded culture in Abbeywood and had acquired a sense of importance in marking the transition from work place to weekend family place. There appears to be a link between the formal and informal, socio-technical and socio-cultural DE&S, and the technical and social language that was used, in the form of gossip as a group coherence mechanism, thereby linking the socio-technical to the socio-cultural.

In a socio-technical, organisational rules based sense, people who went to breakfast should have clocked out<sup>76</sup> because DE&S, in one sense, did not officially sanction the occurrence of Friday breakfasts during work time. However, few people clocked out and back in again and the breakfast was often justified as being an *'informal team meeting'* (Shaw, 2007-2010).

The fact that *'Fat Boys Friday's'* breakfasts were tolerated implies that the DE&S leadership considered that there was a benefit to be gained by teams in DE&S from the activity, and that in turn DE&S as a whole would benefit from it.

However, Friday breakfasts were by no means a whole team activity, and the groups that did take part could be self-selecting:

*'There was an element of socialisation, but it tends to revolve around a subset of the team, but it was a broadly based subset. It's largely a few individuals from each area and it's sort of age related, it's family circumstance related, it tends to be the single people, younger people'* (Shaw, 2011q).

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<sup>76</sup> Used the Flexible working recording system to indicate that they were not working but taking a break from work.

And by being self-selecting it could lead to the formation of in-groups and out-groups.

In addition to Friday breakfasts occurring at Abbeywood, they also occurred at DE&S Corsham, where at that time there was no formal restaurant, only the Mess. For example:

*‘...Fat Boy breakfasts, I mean that’s a really interesting one because I know parts of my team here would go to the Sergeant’s Mess for breakfast or for lunch and so on, so I’m looking forward to seeing what happens when we get into the new build,<sup>77</sup> because going down to the restaurant for breakfast as a group is something that becomes a lot easier’ (Shaw, 2011d).*

It appears that in DE&S food was a consistent factor that helped to integrate staff into teams and also to maintain group coherence.

**Finding: Personal cultural adjustments had their own label within the DE&S vernacular. This was the Abbeywood Coffee Culture.**

Within the context of socialisation that was accompanied by food or drink, there was also a more frequent activity than breakfasts that was at that time peculiar to Abbeywood and which was recognized in the wider MOD. This practice informally socialised people into smaller groups in DE&S, and also improved group coherence and group identity. It was called *the Abbeywood coffee culture*.

Meeting for coffee for a chat with peers was a subtle element of food based socialisation that appeared to be linked with gossip and group coherence. Coffee cart<sup>78</sup> socialisation could occur when a new member joined a team.

For example, one of the first things that would happen when someone joined a group they would be bought a cup of coffee, or some other beverage. The new

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<sup>77</sup> A new HQ building was being constructed at the time.

<sup>78</sup> The areas that provided coffee were in the restaurants and were called Coffee Carts.

group member would then spend some time either with their new line manager or with a peer who had been assigned to *buddy* them to help them navigate their first hours and days in the new group.

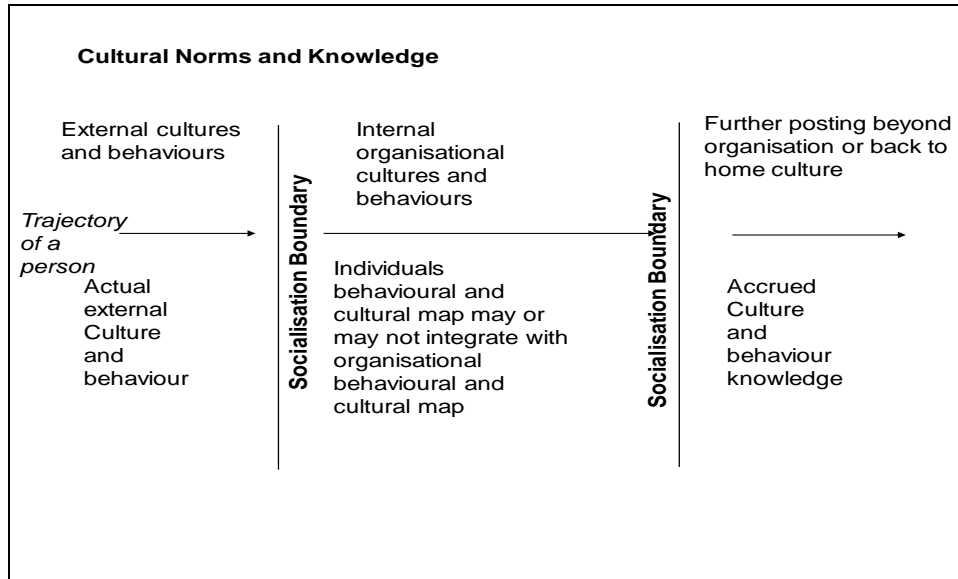
They would engage in the pattern of conversation that would enable the established group member to find out more about the new member, and also the new member about their new team.

Coffee cart socialisation initiated a pattern of activity that appears to align with what Feldman and others term re-socialisation, see for example, Feldman (1976), Van Maanen (1978), and also Van Maanen and Schein (1979). This research labels the type of re-socialisation that is described here as personal cultural adjustments, because they happened when they were needed. They could be personally or team directed, and they were subtle and informal elements of passing on and learning predominantly cultural norms, rather than organisational rules.

#### **5.3.4 Learned and Acquired Behaviours During Induction and Socialisation**

Personal cultural adjustment activities appeared to be all voluntary, carried out by the person in order to integrate themselves into their new group. They occurred in conjunction with formal induction, but they occurred predominantly after the temporal boundary of 5–10 working days during which formal induction was deemed to occur and during which knowledge was transferred that allowed the new group member to integrate their world view with that of the group (Dean, 1984) (Chao et al., 1994). Figure 5-1 proposes a graphical interpretation of what Furnham (2011pp 116 -118) describes as the acquisition of norms in the context of *knowledge transfer* on joining a new group.





**Figure 5-1 Learned and Acquired Behaviours**

Source Derek Shaw

Figure 5-1 shows the trajectory of knowledge integration that a group member takes on entry and through groups in DE&S. It shows the boundaries where external culture and behaviour that were learned before the group member joined that group exist, and also where those behaviours and cultures may not integrate with the new group's behavioural and cultural map. It also shows the boundary where the new group's behaviours have been learned and assimilated, prior to the individual moving on to another group.

Within this trajectory personal cultural adjustments also took place on a daily, and often more frequent basis in established teams, where group members took a break from their desks and had a cup of tea or coffee, or had a coffee and a cigarette. In personal cultural adjustments, group coherence appeared to be maintained through interaction in small, informal groups of 2-3 people (Shaw, 2007-2015).

The new group member gained from these informal coffee breaks, the ability to start navigating the boundaries within the group. They also developed an

understanding of the personalities of peers, and also became exposed to the group language, for example to local acronyms (Shaw, 2014l). Personal cultural adjustments could be initiated and made through what might be called gossip, but the interaction appeared to actually increase the knowledge of the new group member and how they were situated within the group, both socio-technically and socio-culturally.

This view chimes with that of Foster (2004 pp 82-83) in his work on gossip, suggesting that gossip was an integral part of group coherence.

In addition to the gossip that occurred during these coffee breaks, the conversation moved backwards and forwards between social and functional information exchange, discussing the functional aspects of a group member's role.

It was also observed when the Corsham New Environment was built, that coffee shops were built into it, and that small informal meetings also began to occur in those coffee areas (Shaw, 2012g). This indicates that a subtle change of organisational practice, which might be defined as a cultural change, occurred at Corsham as a result of this change.

**Finding: Group members reinforced group cohesion by regular contact within a group size of 5±2. This size of group reinforced group cohesion at a very intimate level, producing a very highly bonded group that changed in relationship from the purely functional professional work based group, into a stronger relationship that appeared to be based on friendship.**

It was observed that groups carried out activities in order to remain cohesive. These activities often occurred in small groups, rather than large groups:

*'...but I'd say a group of about five or six. I mean I do still know the other guys well enough to say hello and we have a Christmas party every year that kind of thing, but I mean there's a group of about four or five that I probably...we go out for lunch or for a few beers or go for lunch in work*

*something like that, we do keep in touch a lot more regularly really, more friends really now than work colleagues' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The informant was a commercial graduate, a C2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre G indicates a group with 5-6, within the  $5\pm 2$  members that was a longer lasting group size that appeared as a consistent factor in both formal and informal groups within DE&S. This group was stable for at least a year as a larger informal unit, but the key group that maintained regular contact were a group of 5-6 members.

This group size is within the boundary of  $5\pm 2$  group members that is proposed as a small stable group. Where there were friendship groups, as opposed to functional groups in operation, a key factor in the formation, strength, and longevity of those groups appeared to be the content of the social conversations. These were based around the shared interest of group members, and often the conversation would revolve around a single subject or interest, such as football or rugby.

Where they were not in a fully open plan office this behaviour may also occur in groups who were geographically located together and carried out the same general function. Such groups therefore possessed a highly differentiated geographic, functional identity.

The following examples provide differing views of a highly bonded group within Operating Centre B:

*'...you know when lunch starts because [the four people] all push their chairs back and it'll be football wall to wall for the next half hour. Just solid conversation. And I described this, making a joke out of it to [...] I was sitting next to one of the females who was almost crying with laughter because she said you've got that absolutely nailed, if you're not a football fan and you're on that particular set [...] they won't talk to you, because it's football' (Shaw, 2011h).*

Also,

*‘...Yes, but that’s...they’ve done that even before they were this team, when they were DLO, every Monday morning it was football talk. You just get used to it now, kind of thing. You actually know that [ ] was Blackpool and [ ] was Spurs, so was [ ] ..... and then you get the rest of us that don’t do that, but that doesn’t...you know...when we split from one spur [building area] into two spurs [building areas] and everything it’s kind of Monday mornings I thought football was annoying, but when you don’t have it and there’s no banter and there’s complete silence in the office it’s like oh, oh, it’s kind of...can’t explain it, but it’s not quite jolly as much, but you just...it’s something they’ve always done, they always will...’ (Shaw, 2011t).*

The group that is described here had also worked together for many years, and had also socialised together outside work. They therefore had a social identity that was based on the twin axes of social interests and knowledge and also functional professional interests. They were a stable group of four members who discussed football alongside performing their professional function.

But on the other side of the floor-plate, within the same team, one other person joined in with the football discussion, taking the football to a group size of five. In contrast to the football group there was a group of three people that formed a consistent group that discussed archaeology within the same overall grouping. They were viewed as the out-group in this team, because they did not talk football.

**Finding: Food appeared to play a role in the regular socialisation activities through Birthday cakes, Christmas parties and Mess nights.**

The informal socialisation practices of *Fat boys Friday breakfasts* and coffee cart socialisation presented thus far in Chapter 5 have all formed part of the social fabric of DE&S. The cycle of work life in DE&S was also marked by such things

as: tasks completed, birthdays, people leaving and joining groups, Christmas meals, promotion, moving from one job to another, or retirement. In this example, the respondent is a C2 grade civil servant working in Operating Centre D:

*‘Yes, we still go out for Christmas meals which was I would say informal team-building. And we do have every now and again social evenings, you know if somebody leaves, they’ll send out an email going out into Bristol or Bath and everybody’s welcome. But you usually get the same people turning up, you know, to the leaving drinks as you do to the Christmas meal, it’s very difficult to get those that, I wouldn’t say were not interested, but those that probably have further to travel, coming along to these events’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

Christmas and similar events appeared to be ad-hoc and self-generated by group members.

Also, as with Friday breakfasts, some of those taking part appeared to be self-selecting, with the same people attending. This may have led to the formation of in-groups within those activities. Ad hockery was shown in the following example from a serving RAF Officer who was on his first posting into DE&S, but who had worked alongside the DLO in previous assignments:

*‘...So we [our team] have a couple of socials, we had a Christmas do and I know you might just say that’s a night in the pub and a meal out that we organised ourselves...’ (Shaw, 2011g).*

All of these events appeared to play an important role in the informal socialisation of staff and of reinforcing group coherence and identity.

Much effort was put into organising the Christmas meal. In terms of the management and organisation of the Christmas meal, the following presents a narrative within Operating Centre A (Shaw, 2007-2010) but is representative of what happened throughout DE&S.

A small committee of four would meet early in the year, with an average age of around 23, and a team leader to organise the event to take place in a local restaurant. Part of the presentation of the dinner included the supply of seating cards with name and menu selection on the reverse. The role groups all sat together at the dinner, showing the strength of work-based social bonds. The commercial teams were seated together, finance were seated together on a ring fenced table, the business team were seated together. Thus the groups all maintained their functional group structures in a social context.

There were two tables dedicated to '*also-rans*' who were a mix from the other areas and who were not included in any of the other social groups, so could be viewed as outsiders or, in the vernacular as '*billy no mates*'. (Shaw, 2009d). The noise from these two tables was high and, as was usual at these events, after the meal the groups went to a local pub to continue the celebrations. At the first pub, several groups immediately sought out sufficient seating and tables to accommodate exactly the mix which had been seen in the restaurant so they all without exception remained in their original groups.

Only those of the higher age groups circulated socially, but they did not venture too often or too long out of their comfort zone, as they appeared to consider that their visits were seen almost as an invasion of the locally networked groups. As people moved on to the second pub the groups made the transfer as a stable social group and still remained unmixed with the other groups. During the following day, back at work, people from different groups were greeted with comments like *where did you get to* and *didn't see you after we moved pubs*.

The typical range of group size for these events was between 15 and 70 people, although some would host 90 staff or more at a lunchtime venue (Shaw, 2012f). Overall, it appears that in general, Christmas meals were good events socially that were well supported, but they were not effective as annual team-building events, or as a social events, because teams tended to stay within their work place boundaries when they were put into a social context. The failure appears

to be because people were seated in their work groups for social safety and not enthused to mix, and the one annual chance to get to know others was lost.

In addition to the Christmas meal, the birthdays of team members were another important marker in the work year. Birthdays were often marked with cakes, which were purchased at the local supermarket, but if the person was a cook, or the birthday significant, they might be home made.

Cakes were also used to signal group boundaries, and whether a person was in the group, or out of it. To achieve this, cakes were brought in and put on the Meridian<sup>79</sup> in the middle of the group of desks where the cake donor sat. The donor would say what the event was, or others would ask, and the news would be released, often as an email invitation sent to the wider team, specific people, or other colleagues who were not within the local floor-plate to partake of the cakes.

Relaying the news to specific people appeared to be effective in creating a group identity and of signalling who was, and who was not, in the group:

*‘One day there was a cheesecake brought in, it was put on the table on the other side of the cupboards, away from where the group sat. And certain individuals were called over and given a piece and told to eat it there and not take it back to their desks (which was what normally happens). Three people weren't invited to have it, we [the un-invited], felt awful, we knew we weren't in the clique’ (Shaw, 2011x).*

This example of what might be called cake effected social categorisation indicates a negative way of signalling who was in a group, and of defining clique boundaries. It also appears to indicate that informal socialisation practice could enforce group boundaries, between staff, and between those who could or could not take part in that practice at that time. On the other hand, it appeared that, if

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<sup>79</sup> Low level storage in the middle of some seating areas.

carried out as deliberate acts of integration and inclusiveness, these socialisation events would enhance group cohesiveness, but not necessarily in a positive way.

Another form of food based socialisation was cake making and regular fundraising<sup>80</sup> cake sales:

*‘So I think that promotes a bit of a team identity as well. So the commercial branch often have, every couple of months would have a cake sale for Help The Heroes and it’s all announced on the Tannoy and everyone goes down there to say ‘Hi, well done’ and have a bit of cake ‘thanks for supporting the charity and by the way good to see you all working together’ and wander off again. So a bit of a team I think around there’ (Shaw, 2011s).*

The example shows home baking as a positive integrative, team-building practice, which facilitated the development of a positive group identity. One of the effects of these types of socialisation appeared to be that, for group members, identification with specific groups was flexible and able to adjust to circumstance and personality, and was not necessarily contradictory, thus chiming with Pate et al. (2010) and separately Kirke (2007d), in their discussions of the manifestation of nested and multiple identities in organisations.

The outcome of those practices was that there appeared to be an effect on a new group member’s feelings of identity, belonging, group cohesiveness, and also their understanding of the group’s norms and customs - its socio-cultural character.

The previous observations, coupled with the associated responses and the evidence surrounding Friday breakfasts, all appear to show that there was

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<sup>80</sup> There was a definite Great British Bake Off Effect observed during the research period. This was manifest by cakes being baked, in ‘bake off style’ and being brought in to offices to be shared and judged. Field notes May 2014 Bicester, Abbeywood Operating Centre D, February 2015.



stability of participation within those who took part, and those that did not. Also this stability could create a boundary between the in-group and the out-group.

This could be said to indicate that this socialisation acted in two directions, both to include and exclude people, and also to mark boundaries and also demonstrate a passive form of exclusivity and inclusivity within a group.

These examples have indicated the effects of some informal socialisation practises in a mixed military and civilian environment. There were also events that appeared to be promoted to reinforce predominantly military identities within DE&S, such as Battle of Britain Celebrations (Shaw, 2014k) or Trafalgar nights:

*‘ We [the Military] do mess dinners. We [The Royal Navy] do Trafalgar night<sup>81</sup>. Which interestingly in [ my group] causes a small conflict because geographically we’re over here in Corsham and there’s already the Pilkington officer’s mess, well they do their own Trafalgar night function, so when I organisationally came into [my group] I suddenly had this bizarre situation in that I’m based in Abbeywood, which Trafalgar night dinner do I go to? Am I part of DE&S? Obviously as a Senior Navy guy in [my group] it was a no-brainer I went to [my group] Trafalgar night dinner and obviously I could have gone to both...but it was that interesting where were my loyalties now? Am I...is it [my group] or is it the broader DE&S Naval gathering that dominates’ (Shaw, 2011o).*

The Senior Naval Officer shows the dilemma of possessing multiple identities, as he was not sure who he owed greatest loyalty to: the smaller group where he worked, or the larger group DE&S? He reveals here that he chose the smaller group; thus, appearing to reinforce a theme that was identified when informants were asked how strongly they identified with particular groups in DE&S, and it was found that they would predominantly identify more strongly with the smaller group, rather than a larger group. This chimes with findings from section 4.5.1,

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<sup>81</sup> A celebration of Admiral Lord Nelson’s Victory at Trafalgar.

where it was shown that there was a difference in how strongly people identified with different groups in DE&S.

This response also shows that military personnel had access to exclusive socialisation activities which may have reinforced their military identity and ethos, as opposed to reinforcing a joint military/civilian identity or ethos. The military personnel only activities produced a potential for divided loyalties within those group members that attended those events. The Naval Officer's response indicates once again that if there was a conflict of identity felt by military personnel, it appeared to be more likely that the military identity, combined with the smaller working group identity would win and be reinforced, often at the expense of the larger group identity of the Operating Centre or DE&S.

### **5.3.5 Outcomes and Effects of Informal Socialisation**

**Finding: Formal DE&S induction specified benefits to DE&S and to participants, informal socialisation did not. Outcomes were therefore only specified and agreed by peers and group members.**

These outcomes were predominantly related to relationship building within the group. This was because, as described by an established SCS 1\* civil servant, with wide experience in MOD, not just in DE&S, they saw the value of informal socialisation as being '*seeing the social side of people*':

*'There might well be times where because it's a less formal situation people have been perhaps slightly unguarded in comments that they've made expressing personal views. So yes, sometimes you find out things about people you rather wish you didn't know and it is entirely possible to end up with a less good opinion of someone than you had before so they're certainly not without risk and I think that's particularly true for leaders as well. I think there probably have been a couple of occasions where people who are more senior in the team will have expressed views and that's caused me or somebody else to think, oh right OK. That's what you really*

*think is it? Well, in that case, I just need to be a bit more careful. So there's certainly those consequences, yes. It's just that now you've seen another dimension of them and you know more about them and they're highly likely to have just continued as their 'that's who I am that's fine' without thinking it's a particular problem. But it's just another thing you know about the person and it might be therefore...yes I think it does stay with you permanently' (Shaw, 2011h).*

There appeared to be a degree of consistency with regard to the outcomes of informal practice that were expected and observed. It appears then that the social side of people was seen as being more important at times than the formal technical elements. This response chimes with the view of, for example, Anthony and Janet (2002) and also Salas et al. (1999), who indicate that a major element of maintaining group coherence occurs through the transfer of social information.

There might however, be negative aspects of this behaviour. These might be interpreted in this context as people who were presenting one face to the group, while really thinking something else:

*'...It puts it [the team building activity] on an informal basis so you can see the social side of people as well as the work side. It gives you a chance to assess personalities if nothing else, so it's just the general human exchanges that you'd be looking for....Getting to know the people in the team, finding out who... what they are, what they're like, any weird pastimes that they may have. And I've always said and I always feel that it's that informal contact. If I know people better you can deal with them better, you can understand them a bit better, you can do better business with them. Because I don't suppose they do it just to let us go and have some fun. There must be a benefit associated with it' (Shaw, 2011h).*

This response from a B1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A provides another typical representation of these themes relating to where group members wanted to get to know people better, in order to build on social interaction as a

precursor to formal business interaction. Thus, it appears that for many people the informal took precedence over the formal. This social interaction was useful to both the new group member and also to established group members.

It was also observed that informal socialisation activity was not formally measured, either as process or through effect. However, it was subjectively measured by those who experienced it, as, *Does it feel good? Do I know this person any better?* This subjective peer assessment of the value and meaningfulness of informal socialisation accords with the observation that informal socio-cultural socialisation and integration appeared to be more useful, and better received by group members than the formal process in this way.

The informal socialisation of group members appeared to support the formal business practices. This was observed by the following SCS 1\* respondent:

*'I don't know that we organised many things that were deliberate familiarisation things, so we just tried to make sure that the core things that were the fabric of a team's life if you like, so team meeting and bits and pieces, were done in such a way as to bring people together and not play up to the fact that there were two groups...'* (Shaw, 2011h).

And also, from Operating Centre A:

*'...we just want to break down some barriers and just get people together and enjoy themselves and get the socialising going on a bit better. Improving the sort of informal communication across the team...'* (Shaw, 2011h).

They suggest that bringing groups of people together, and *'not playing up the fact that there were two groups'* (Shaw, 2011h) was an aim of informal socialisation. The bringing together of the groups was an attempt to change the way that groups worked together, and to make the separate groups function as one, making the two smaller teams into a larger and perhaps more inclusive one. This might be

called team-building, but if it was labelled as such informally, it was not an official DE&S label that was applied to the practice.

A conclusion then follows from the consistency of the responses on informal socialisation that the major outcome of informal socialisation was the improvement of informal communications within teams.

## **5.4 Strand 3: Team-building**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

Section 5.4 will report the findings and present analysis on the concept of team-building that was observed in DE&S. Team-building was used as an accepted organisational practice in DE&S to induct and integrate new group members, but primarily to maintain group coherence, to promote an in-group identity, and also to socialise groups into changed organisational states (Shaw, 2013h). Team-building activities were carried in group of up to 160 members.

### **5.4.2 Team-building; integration and coherence or disintegration?**

**Finding:** There were two types of team-building, the formal and the informal.

Two types of team-building were identified in DE&S. These could be characterised as formal and informal, or socio-technical and socio-cultural.

### **5.4.3 Formal Team-building**

Formal team-building occurred as a series of formal, directed, and measured activities, called break-through events, see Littlefield (2000), in which team leaders and group members had certain expectations. These activities are also discussed in section 5.2.2 . Team-building via break-through activities was shown by a B1 grade member of the management team in Operating Centre A:

*‘But classically though the break-through ones were interesting because I went on those and you were energised and you get lots of good ideas coming up from the ground, and one of the frustrating things was people talk about actions and then you don’t see them happening’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

Also:

*‘...And they’ve been good I’ve had various of those over the years, the formal ones where there were outcomes, formal ones where the outcomes haven’t been quite specific and it’s been getting together to try and break down communications, get to know each other better, ...it depends I think on the specific circumstances and requirements of the team as seen by the team leader and the senior management team about what they’re trying to achieve with that and I’ve seen a whole range [from] ‘we’ve got a serious problem here how were we going to do it and overcome it’, to ‘we just want to break down some barriers and just get people together and enjoy themselves and get the socialising going on a bit better’. Improving the sort of informal communication across the team’ (Shaw, 2011p).*

Formal team-building events, therefore, appeared to be viewed as erratic in performance and infrequent in their practice by staff members. However, some informants recognized the importance of the informal, as opposed to the formal elements of the team-building. The type of break-through events that are described here were associated with organisational change, for example when teams merged. The events were designed to create a common understanding in the team of what the new team was there to achieve, to develop a team charter or common set of rules and behaviours that the team could agree and then work to:

*‘...Formal or informal...I suppose you could say that they were all formal in that we had a day with the agenda, part inside–outside, part presentation, part small group work, part walking around the static displays, talking to the soldiers and looking and asking about the kit’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

Photograph 5-1 was taken at the event that is described above and shows two of the group looking at equipment at a static display during the event that was described in the previous response (Shaw, 2009a).



**Photograph 5-1 Example of Static Display at the Team-Building Event**

Source Derek Shaw

Attendees, however, would often be frustrated with the event and its lack of effectiveness

*‘The great danger is, of course, you go away on a teambuilding and you write several flipcharts worth of things to be done and then two years later you dust them off and regenerate them’ (Shaw, 2011h).*

It thus appears that in order to be effective, formal team-building must be appropriately designed and followed up.

It also appears that the formal team-building events must include informal activities as well, in order that the social as well as the functional needs of the team and its members are met.

**Finding: For a period after the creation of DE&S team-building was not funded.**

In the DPA and also in DE&S, In order to initiate a formal team-building exercise, the management team for the event were given resources which were used to, for example, book a hotel or to hire an external facilitator (Shaw, 2007-2010). This legitimised the practice organisationally. But as a result of funding



constraints, there was a period after the creation of DE&S when both formal and informal team-building appeared to be frowned upon, as a B2 grade member of the Commercial Function said:

*‘...When we had money typically it’s the away day or couple of away days at a hotel facilitated either indoor or outdoor or both exercises, I mean the last formal one I took was when I was in DLO, so it’s going back probably 2005 or something now I suspect...’* (Shaw, 2011h).

Also,

*‘It depends on the budget. It would be nice to go away and do it outside of work.as we did before’* (Shaw, 2011h).

This lack of funding appeared to coincide with the period when DE&S was initiated and had started to develop its own identity. But the reduction in formal team-building appeared to reinforce employee cynicism, in that it was believed that: *‘they [DE&S] don’t value teams anymore’* (Shaw, 2011h).

These statements imply that DE&S put finances and budgetary control ahead of workforce satisfaction and coherence.

The following informant, a Senior Naval Officer, who as a Team Leader, had recently re-instigated more formal team-building which appeared to have a high level of engagement from his team:

*‘Well obviously the team-building event that we had, because we’re not allowed to call it team-building, was in July and so what we’re seeing at the moment is in a sense the fallout from that is people’s willingness to attend the focus groups, to attend my sort of all rank discussions to put suggestions into the suggestion box and that’s happening and we’re getting quite a good response from that. So that has endured across the summer period and into...well it’s been a very busy start to the autumn*

*season..... I can't look back and say we did something like this two years ago and are we still reaping the benefits from that'* (Shaw, 2011q).

The Officer's remarking that *'we aren't allowed to call it team-building'*, appears to support that DE&S did not promote or fund team-building. It also indicates the ways that teams circumvented this ban, by, for example, calling it *'focus groups'*, *'team-development'* if in stable teams, or *'break-through'* if it was carried out in the context of organisational change. Success of the event was, in this case, measured by the levels of continuing engagement by group members in the focus groups.

But even for the Commodore, the practice of formal team-building appeared to be subversive because he felt that he was going against DE&S by funding and carrying out the activity.

Therefore while he felt that team-building was valuable, he also confirmed previous responses when he felt that DE&S did not value teams and also that there was a divide between DE&S and the Project Teams. Therefore, it might be suggested that the type of team-building employed was seen as being important, implying that DE&S could spend money more effectively by promoting informal, social team-building, rather than the technical traditional team-building that was favoured by DE&S and which included competitive activities, and as Sherif (1956) described, and as will be shown subsequently in this thesis, did not build teams but broke them apart.

It appears that the subversion of the corporate ban on team-building was achieved by the 'team' as a construct indicating that they needed to improve the way that the team works together and carrying out informal team-building. This in turn appears to indicate that the stance that DE&S took at that time, which was one of not allowing team-building to occur because of 'funding constraints', may have been a false saving.

A valid question that could be asked here is: Was the stopping of team-building events an effective way of saving money? Should money have been invested in enabling people to work together more effectively, and develop better informal communication mechanisms, especially as this was something that was described by the respondents as having been effective at removing some of the barriers between groups and reducing their group's distinctiveness?

As a result, teams carried out team-building, either informally, or formally, and the aims of these events were the aims of the teams, rather than promoting the corporate aims of DE&S.

One of the effects of this may have been that the concept of that team identity was privileged and reinforced over and above the concept of that team being part of DE&S and linking to a stronger, more corporate identity.

It also seems that team members would appear to support the idea of carrying out team coherence activities, and would prefer them to be informal rather than formal.

This might imply that DE&S was considered by its leadership to be a temporary, as opposed to an enduring organisation, because it did not appear to consciously want to build teams up and create coherence. This appeared to lead to a perception within teams in DE&S that the concept of '*team*' was not valued in a social sense, and was only valued in a functional sense of producing outputs.

The existence of this perception in turn implies a link to the levels of emotional intelligence that were observed within members of the leadership groups, and indicates an inability or unwillingness to address the socio-cultural benefits of team-building as opposed to focussing on the perceived socio-technical benefits.

**Finding: Team building occurred within a particular group size boundary.**

In terms of group size, a B1 grade Team Leader in Operating Centre D indicated that team-building only occurred below the 2\* Operating Centre level:

*‘...team-building tends to be considered at a lower tactical level, I think the largest team-building I was ever technically on was when I was in [...] we had 160 people ...’* (Shaw, 2015e).

This indicates that there was a physical size boundary below which a group was considered to be a team and it indicates a hierarchical level at which team building occurred.

Group cohesion appeared to be enhanced in these smaller teams, and boundaries were created, broken and re-created within and between these groups. The group size that appeared to be defined as a maximum for a team was below 160 members. This matches significantly with Dunbar’s cognitive group size maximum of 150 members (Dunbar, 1993a p 685 ). It also matches the data provided in section 4.6, of a maximum team size of  $150 \pm 30$  or  $135 \pm 15$  members as being organisationally legitimised team sizes in DE&S.

**Finding: Formal Team-building in DE&S was designed to promote a sense of identity.**

Identity was discussed in section 4.3-4.5, but it is legitimate to place identity within the context of team-building. This was because team-building also reinforced group identity in terms of a *brand*.

The manifestation and reinforcement of group identity appeared to be, as is described by a C1 grade internal consultant working in Operating Centre B, a consistent and persistent element of team-building:

*‘...and I’ve been part of a team-building exercise with my new old team, if that makes sense, where we rebranded ourselves, got to know each other under our new brand’* (Shaw, 2011j).

This same effect was reported by a B1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A:

*‘...if you like it was promoting this team identity and understanding who the team are. Getting to know the people in the team, finding out who... what they are, what they’re like, any weird pastimes that they may have....’*  
(Shaw, 2011h).

So it appears that getting to know people was an outcome of these events. That theme is also confirmed by the following respondent, a B2 grade civil servant who reiterates the hierarchy of identity between the role team and DE&S, and the fragmenting effect that this had on group behaviour:

*‘... And the developing a team identity, was the one that where I sit...concerns me the most because I do a lot of work with the three levels of management, the 2\*, the 1\* and at what we call now, Delivery Teams, Project Teams, the old IPTs. And there was very little identity. People identify with their immediate team, but they don’t identify with being part of an organisation and therefore what you have was an awful lot of people that are pulling in different directions. And as an ex-business manager, I look at business objectives and building better teams and getting the understanding and then I look at the team identity and I think in some ways within where we are now those are actually polar opposites, because we are trying to, with very little success, create a new team identity, but these team-buildings (sic) happen at a lower level. So it enforces the behaviours at the lower level and not that these teams are part of a bigger whole’*  
(Shaw, 2011t)

Once again the respondent indicates that in terms of identity and brand, teams are small, not large and that small group behaviours could work against larger group’s behaviour, thus pitting the project team against the corporate group. This chimes with previous responses where the strength of group membership is perceived to be, and expressed as, stronger at smaller group sizes than at larger ones. This factor then reinforces the small team identity:

*'Invariably yes, it improves the team identity. I don't think it necessarily goes much wider than the team. With changes and post-mapping and all the rest of it, with team identity changes, some people are affected positively and some folk are affected negatively in their future role and then the communication that goes out' (Shaw, 2011h).*

This response from a C1 grade civil servant in Operating centre A appears to suggest that team-building within DE&S over time may also have been creating boundaries between teams and team-members. The creation of those boundaries may have occurred because the act of team-building developed a sense of identity within the group, which automatically created the *other* of those that were not within that group. It appears therefore, that while team-building was designed by DE&S to create a sense of identity within teams, DE&S did not feel like a team because it made less effort to build teams and to formally develop team cohesiveness. It also appears to indicate a group size factor, previously described, that DE&S was too large a group to be a team, and to be meaningful to many of its members in the way that the concept of a team was.

**Finding: Socio-technical and socio-cultural activities and effects were also often conjoined within team-building events.**

Formal team-building events were choreographed by management. They appeared to consist of two elements: during the day the event was primarily socio-technical, and aimed at improving how the team functioned in a formal sense; the informal evening sections of the formal events were primarily socio-cultural in both nature and effect:

*'...I went on a team-building exercise over two days, there were gymnastics at eleven, twelve o'clock at night. However, the next day the camaraderie of the whole team had just got closer. It's funny someone said to me you go to team-building events because of the evening, because that's when you start to build the team, it's not the little activities*

*you do to bring the team closer together during the day, it's actually the night time activities' (Shaw, 2011j).*

No doubt the events of the evening could sometimes also be classed by participants as being risqué, and the DE&S press office was acutely aware of the adage: *what would the Daily Mail say if they found out* (Shaw, 2008a). However, these informal activities were thought by participants to be the most important, and also the most effective elements of team-building. The evening events appeared to be consistently carried out in conjunction with food and alcohol which both provided a very strong social glue that aided group cohesiveness. There could also be singing, in the form of Karaoke, involved, (Shaw, 2008d) reflecting Kirke's (2014) study and others such as Collins (2002), and separately Bensimon (2009) on the use of song in creating group boundaries.

It therefore appears that while formal team-building was expected to improve socio-technical group coherence, it was the informal team-building events in the evening that were more meaningful to participants than formal-team-building. The fact that informal team-building appeared to be more successful than formal team-building echoes the findings of sections 5.2 and 5.3 which found that informal socialisation appeared to be more successful than formal induction.

**Finding: Team building was a divisive activity if carried out wrongly.**

It also appeared that if not well organised, team-building could be divisive, rather than inclusive, as described by firstly, a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre C:

*'...I think most recently one of the dangers was it can actually highlight the differences and exacerbate them more than actually bring them together. Throughout my career the worst, by far, team-building ones I've been on were the ones which were not inclusive which can actually exclude people. So the classic example of that would be doing something which was very physical, so all the nice young fit people and the soldiers love it and get*

*stuck in and people with, like myself, with dodgy old backs and everything sitting at the side feeling like a tool basically. That just had the completely opposite effect of what you intended of trying to bring people together, you're just making some people feel left out. And I have to say my long experience had told me never allow the military to organise a team-building event because it'll always be some outward bound type activity which was by definition not inclusive to a civilian workforce because there would always be people who can't join in to that. So you have to be really careful what you do and how you design these things. I think there's potentially a lot of damage done by poorly designed team-building events where they haven't thought through what they want from it, they haven't thought through the design of it and it's poorly implemented'. (Shaw, 2011h).*

This view was confirmed by a C1 civil servant in Operating Centre D:

*'...but I think you need to pay attention to your team before you decide what would help the team to build. Instead of saying 'well it's OK chaps I like sailing, so you're all going to come along for a week on a yacht with me', that's great, suits me, but it doesn't necessarily suit everybody else' (Shaw, 2011h).*

It appears that mixed formal team-building, where civil servants and military personnel were within the same team, or even where there was an age or ability boundary between groups, appeared to be predominantly received negatively by participants. This may lead to boundaries appearing within teams between those who could carry out the activities, or who 'liked' them, and those who could, or did not.

Boundaries became evident between those who could, those who could not, those that would not, and those that would only grudgingly take part in those activities, for whatever reason. Excluded groups might for example, be characterised by age, military, or civilian service, physical ability and willingness



or ability to take part. In those instances, formal team-building appeared to be disintegrative rather than integrative.

Military team-building appeared to be perceived as being primarily based around physical activity, such as expeditions and physical activities,(Shaw, 2013c). while civil servants appeared to prefer more inclusive and intellectual pursuits such as the building of machines to launch eggs without breaking them (Shaw, 2009d).

Many people would take part in the physical activity, not simply to take part, but also to enjoy the team-building that it engendered. While that might be culturally and contextually acceptable in a military, fitness, or age appropriate group, physical activity as team-building in DE&S was more likely to be disintegrative, rather than integrative within a mixed gender and ability group.

Team-building that was carried out in this way naturally created boundaries or made existing ones more obvious, which generated teams that fractured along negative lines, creating negative in-group identities. Those boundaries were likely to be characterised by cynicism, leading to out-group members identifying negatively with the rest of their team.

As a result, this behaviour produced exclusive groups and group boundaries within the larger group which produced negative, rather than positive sub-groups.

The effect of disintegration was reported consistently by respondents and confirmed by observation.

It appears, therefore, that great care must be taken in the design of formal team-building events. It appears also that formal team-building had greater risks and fewer benefits for DE&S in terms of developing team coherence and collaboration. This was because competition, which appeared to be an integral element of formal team-building in DE&S, actually served to create in-groups and out-groups (Sherif, 1956), rather than build a unified team.

**Finding: The good intentions of the team-building activity were often lost when people returned to their desks to carry out their day job**

With any practice there are intended and unintended effects. In DE&S where there was latency of effect that produced a finding that was consistent, but which had also been observed anecdotally by the researcher (Shaw, 2007-2010) which was that the effect of the event disappeared quickly on return to the floorplate:

*'... it's a bit like the guy who goes onto the training course on behavioural stuff and as he goes back they all say 'we can tell you've been on a course' and within weeks they revert back. It's the best intent and then go back into the work place and remember we started the conversation about how busy people are, it's, you go back into the work place and then you get absolutely swamped with the day to day work so all the good intent, there isn't follow through, .... So guess what happened? You start doing the emails.....I suspect that's not uncommon, not just for the group that I look after, I suspect that's quite common for the rest of the groups...' (Shaw, 2011t).*

The respondent, a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre G, suggests that the tension that was seen between what was learned and promoted at the event and what might be called 'doing the day-job' occurs because socio-technical and socio-cultural cultures hold back the changes that are being sought in these events, so culture could be described as being *sticky*. Team-building activities only appeared to have a lasting effect if they were reinforced on a regular basis, but formal, socio-technical team-building only happened annually or biennially.

For example, a C2 civil servant, who worked in a project delivery team in Operating Centre D:

*'With funds the way they were, the expectation of the team was to do what teams historically have done, which was go and stay in a hotel, work the afternoon, have fun in the evening, work the majority of the next day, come*

*back to work. I understand from the feedback that people enjoyed themselves, they were quite shocked that they enjoyed themselves. The food in the mess of course was excellent when they do an evening dinner, so they really enjoyed that. They had a quiz night, they really enjoyed that, but then when they came back to work it was almost like it had never happened'* (Shaw, 2011m).

And also the following from a C1 civil servant in Operating Centre G:

*'Because for me yes, two to three weeks. If I got to know a few people better at that conference then yes probably two or three weeks afterwards it's back to normal. The status quo had been returned to or maintained'* (Shaw, 2011ad).

In some cases the effects were more subtle and the ones that lasted longest were the inter-personal relationships, in which case the negative aspects of team-building may have been forgotten:

*'Hmm, it's hard to say, I mean parts of it lingers for quite some time I think. I think there's always a deep benefit to the better understanding, 'oh, you're not such a bad git after all' type of feeling..... There's a little bit about expectation management, you've set this objective, we're going to achieve this and this and this and you never achieve that 100% so there's a rapid tail off from the perfect outcome of what you think you'd achieved in terms of the business plan and the change in approach, but the deeper benefits last, I think the actual interpersonal relationship benefits last. If the negative ones, when it goes really horribly wrong, those can last as well and probably last longest of all'* (Shaw, 2011h).

This nuanced response is from a B1 grade Team Leader in Operating Centre A. It shows how the informal, relationship building aspects of team-building may last longer. This indicates that informal aspects may therefore be more meaningful to participants than are the formal aspects. But people will remember the really

bad team-building events for a long time; thus, indicating that negative events may have a longer effect in DE&S than do positive events. An alternative explanation may be that group members had forgotten that any socio-technical action had taken place or they did not recognize that where there had been a problem prior to the team-building exercise, it was actually not a problem anymore. A B1 grade civil servant from Operating Centre A describes this, again from the point of view of management:

*‘...Well certainly if you come back from most team-building events there’s a bit of a buzz on the floor-plate that lasts for a week or two’* (Shaw, 2011h).

In addition, the following response from a B2 grade civil servant in Operating Centre C is consistent with the previous response: *‘In special projects world [the effect lasts] as long as the hangover’* (Shaw, 2011h).

It appears then that any positive effects of formal team-building were consistently described as only lasting between three days to three weeks after that. When people had returned to the floor-plate, group members were seen to revert to their old ways of working.

The reasons for this may be linked to a form of process drag, where the day job took primacy over the new processes and social behaviours and identities that had been developed during the team-building activities.

This form of drag appeared to be initiated when teams returned to the geographical and cultural context of their workplace, as opposed to being in the separated context of the formal team-building activity.

This difference in attendees’ expectations in the longevity of the effects also appeared to lead to a difference in group member’s feelings on the utility of the event. These expectations varied both from a personal perspective, and also from the perspective of where a person was situated within the DE&S organisational structure. Even the informal talking over coffee and food during breaks at formal events and during the evening events appeared to be viewed

differently to the formal day-time events, being viewed as ‘down-time’, or not really working.

These informal activities apparently fulfilled the social requirements of general team-building which were described by respondents as team cohesion and they also reinforced social team identity; they were therefore positive outcomes, as opposed to the formal team-building outcomes which appeared to be accidentally predominantly dis-integrative and were therefore in terms of organisational management, negative outcomes.

Thus far, team-building has been described as being formal, with the informal being intertwined within the formal practice. In DE&S there was a separate form of team-building activity identified which did not appear to be called team building, but that was the effect that it had on group members, and teams.

#### **5.4.4 Informal team-building independent of formal team-building**

**Finding: Team-building could characterised as being either formal or informal in effect. These informal activities were frequently peer organised, and predominantly included food and drink.**

The first respondent was ex-British Army, and at the time of the interview, a C2 civil servant in Operating Centre D, he talks of team-building being fragmented:

*‘We [the team] used to have a beer and a bite at least once a month, we used to go out as a little team, but we do still have runs ashore, which was what the Navy like to call it or dine outs and we do still do those, but they tend to be a bit more fragmented, but we have had in the past two teambuilding events and we also still maintain our little identities, our little groups’* (Shaw, 2011g).

And a Senior Officer within the Royal Navy, but based in DE&S, in Operating Centre B indicated that:

*‘...in terms of ethos, values, divisional runs ashore, going ashore to the pub or whatever you go as a group, you look after your mate if he...you don’t allow him to be left behind, you look after each other’* (Shaw, 2011q).

The examples appear to show how the language and dialect from one group could be appropriated and used by another group, even though there was what would be termed *healthy competition* between those groups for much of the time. Also, there appeared to be the recognition of *looking after your mate*, from a military social and technical culture implies socio-cultural bonding within DE&S teams. The response implies a degree of positive cultural influence from military cultures, where group members come together to look after each other both physically and emotionally.

The first respondent also indicates that informal team-building occurred less frequently after the creation of DE&S. This lack of informal team-building appeared to be perceived to be due to the pressures of work, a differing and older demographic within the workforce of DE&S, coupled with parental and other responsibilities, as well as the group members not wanting to socialise outside of work time. There was also as shown earlier, a reduction in financial resource and approval for both formal and informal team-building, implying that DE&S was not prepared to pay to build teams.

As with informal socialisation, the conjunction of formal and informal socialisation with food during socialisation was reported by 82 respondents in total. This appears to chime with an observed pattern, which was that socialisation was carried out in conjunction with either food or drink of some sort, often alcohol, and this appeared to make the practice more meaningful to participants. In addition to the context being informal, the information content of informal socialisation practice was not technical, but was predominantly social information. It appeared to be this informal practice that enabled the integration of group members into the social culture of the group, as opposed to the technical culture.

A question can be asked here, *what are the differences between informal socialisation as described in section 5.3 and informal team-building that are described here?*

A central difference is that informal socialisation was almost unseen within DE&S, it happened every day at the coffee cart and at breakfasts as what this research calls personal cultural adjustments. Informal team-building was different, it was organised by peers and could happen in specific environments, often away from the workplace and was often labelled and also characterised as team-building, whether it was a trip to the pub, a meal out or a cinema evening. The outcomes were the same, improved team social coherence leading hopefully to increased formal team coherence.

#### **5.4.5 Summary of Induction, Socialisation and Team-building**

This research has discovered that there were two types of socialisation in DE&S, characterised as being formal, socio-technical induction and informal socio-cultural socialisation.

DE&S had organisational policy on induction and expected people to be inducted into role teams and their jobs. This indicated that DE&S as an organisation appeared to place value on the functional, socio-technical induction of people. This value appeared to be in getting people to be able to perform their functional role quickly. It was also discovered that there were different levels of induction that coincided with the hierarchical position of the group. However, the practice of these inductions, and group members' experiences of them, indicate that even though formal induction was promoted by DE&S, supported by policy and implemented within teams, it appeared to be at the least inconsistent, making it appear ineffective.

It was observed that graduate and apprentice entry schemes were also viewed as being inconsistent in their approach to induction into DE&S. Engendering expectations' mis-match. Part of this expectations' mis-match appears to arise

from the fact that the schemes are MOD schemes, not DE&S schemes and so a MOD induction was included within the scheme, but when the new entrant on that scheme arrived in DE&S, there appeared to be no formal induction into DE&S. This meant that graduates and apprentices appeared to be disappointed with DE&S, leading to high attrition rates within some cohorts of entrants, up to a reported 50% in one commercial scheme.

This attrition and expectations mis-match was very expensive for DE&S, as it involved the recruitment cost of the graduate, their initial training costs and capitation rates<sup>82</sup>, having to re-employ someone to fill their position, and also the cost of the time that team-members may have spent in bringing them into teams. There may also have been a reputational cost, as DE&S may appear to be a not very good employer, as it perhaps did not seem to care about its new graduates.

It was also discovered that the entry of military personnel in DE&S differed from the entry of civilians. Military personnel expected a formal induction into their teams and they often experienced a two or three day hand-over from a peer, but they apparently received no other formal induction into DE&S. They may have received an induction into the Abbeywood site, but that did not integrate them into the organisational culture of DE&S.

Military personnel did receive a military specific welcome, which appeared to have the effect of maintaining their military privileges and welfare networks while they were at Abbeywood. The outcome of this and the observation that expectations development and mis-match was present in military personnel who joined DE&S were indicators that military personnel might not integrate completely into the organisational and social culture of Abbeywood and DE&S, reinforcing the observation of Yardley and Neal (2007) that the military posting into 'acquisition' was a transitory post.

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<sup>82</sup> The total cost of employment.



This research was carried in the aftermath of the merger of the DPA and the DLO into DE&S. It was observed that when DE&S was created, insufficient effort was put into establishing the new DE&S organisational culture through the socialisation and induction of staff into the new organisational construct of DE&S.

The apparent outcome of this lack of socialisation was that it appears that the new culture did not break away from the old cultures to become different from the DLO and DPA organisational cultures. This meant that the organisational change may not have been as successful in terms of changing the perceived old organisational cultures as had been hoped by DE&S management.

The second type of socialisation that the research discovered was informal socialisation. This appeared to socialise group members into the informal, socio-cultural norms of groups and teams as opposed to them being inducted into the technical, functional rules of DE&S. Socio-cultural integration was observed to occur as and when it was needed and could be intertwined with formal induction.

There were many types of informal socialisation, such as coffee meetings, or '*sitting with Nelly*'. These practices often combined elements of induction, socialisation and group coherence. This means that informal, socio-cultural integration was likely to be experienced more frequently, and was more meaningful than formal socio-technical. It allowed the new group member to make personal cultural adjustments to enable them to learn and integrate into the unwritten norms of the group.

A key characteristic of informal socialisation in DE&S was its conjunction with food. This might be very informal coffee meetings in a Neighbourhood café, or the slightly more formal '*Fat Boys Fridays*', or the very formal Mess dinner. While all of these events were open to all members of an area, self-selection occurred. This might happen because everyone in a team took part, or it might have been where predominantly military personnel or associates took part in specific service related occasions such as Trafalgar Night celebrations.

These predominantly military events appeared to privilege the reinforcement of a military identity as opposed to a more DE&S corporate, mixed civilian and military one.

The result of that appeared to be that all of the socialisation activities could, in fact, produce in-groups and out-groups and therefore not act as whole group activities. It therefore appears that the formation of group boundaries occurred naturally in DE&S, among predominantly social groups in addition to being manufactured by the formal, functional structural breakdown of DE&S.

It was also discovered that there was a temporal boundary between the point at which formal induction was deemed to be completed by new group members and also DE&S policy. This was also the point at which the informal, socio-cultural became the primary method of integrative practice. The formally sanctioned period of one week did not appear to be sufficient to give new group members the confidence that the induction was either long enough, or good enough. It may then appear that DE&S is not providing enough resource to induct new group members into DE&S, leaving people to feel that induction is not as valuable to DE&S as the existence of the DE&S Induction policy DE&S (2009d), (2011a) suggests.

The research discovered that in the practice of formal team-building appeared to be primarily socio-technical in nature, and informal team-building appeared to be primarily socio-cultural. While these two types of team-building might be practised separately, they were often found in conjunction with each other. They might then be expected to reinforce each other, but while that reinforcement happened, it appeared that, as with socialisation, it was the informal that was more meaningful to team-members, and which reinforced the formal and not the other way round. One of the reasons for this direction of reinforcement may have been that formal team-building appeared to be divisive, with obvious differences between different ability groups that may have coincided with cultural differences between military personnel and civil servants. A further reason may be that

formal team-building appeared to have reputation for bringing the same issues to the meeting, year after year, such as communication between management and staff, which never seemed to be good enough. Another reason may have been that the team-building management team often had expectations of the event that differed from those of the employees. The management team of the B2 grades and above had functional outcomes in mind, whereas everyone else wanted to get to know each other better, thus indicating a split between the functional, de-emotionalised world-view of the B2 grades and above, and the para-familial, social view of the employees.

## 5.5 Cultural Tension in DE&S

### 5.5.1 Introduction

Section 5.5 reports the findings on tension between the DPA and the DLO organisational cultures that occurred after DE&S was created. It also indicates that DE&S was very slow in both implementing changes that were required to develop a single, recognisable DE&S organisational culture and also that staff were slow to embrace DE&S.

### 5.5.2 Tension between the Old and the New, and 'Them' and 'Us'.



**Cartoon 5-1 Tension Between the Old and the New in Vernacular Humour**

Source: MOD, Crown Copyright

### **Finding: Cultural tension was recognized in various ways in DE&S**

Within the data there were 64 references given by 47 respondents to the existence of tension between the DPA and the DLO organisational cultures and the DE&S organisational culture. This indicates that cultural tensions appeared to be widely recognized within DE&S by its staff. The following response was given by a C2 civil servant from Operating Centre B; which was in two sites instead of the previous three:

*'I sit within an Operating Centre that was one of the first to merge, we still have a deeply embedded DPA and a DLO culture which is different to a DE&S culture. So it's actually all three because there are some scenarios where you can sit and listen to somebody and think you're still in a DLO frame of mind and because I've worked in the DLO I can see that. My boss has only ever worked in the DE&S in the DPA and she sometimes finds it a little odd when things are said, and I can then fill the back history in'* (Shaw, 2011h).

Members of the groups, or the groups themselves appeared to not have completely changed their behaviour or group culture since the formation of DE&S:

*'I actually find really difficult that they they're actually DPA people and I'm finding that DPA people are actually blaming DLO people for all the issues, but dealing with what I'm dealing at the moment it's actually DPA and it the behaviours of DPA people that is causing a lot of the issues'* (Shaw, 2011h).

Also:

*'There is still a DPA tribe in evidence and a DLO tribe in evidence. And particularly in the Operating Centre, there are two or three people who still hark back to 'oh well we wouldn't have done it that way in DPA' and 'you've got rid of all the good things we did in DPA'* (Shaw, 2011h).

Many of the DE&S groups existed in a very similar forms before the formation of DE&S. Once again, the vernacular use of the word *tribe* to describe the groups in a negative manner indicate s that the term is associated with negative, rather than positive behaviours. Functionally these groups consisted of the same members, the same customers and suppliers, and also performed the same functions as they had in the precursor organisations.

The two groups that were described in the first example formed a new group within Operating Centre B. One group was located at the DLO Headquarters,

and thus close to the centre of power, one group was previously at Corsham, while the third was a predominantly technology focused group within the DPA. These geographical cultures had been reduced from three to two, through the physical collocation of groups as part of the post-merger collocation of teams from other, DE&S sites into the acquisition hub that was based at Abbeywood.

But the old organisational cultures and groups were still visible in this group: both physically, where people sat together; attitudinally in the way that the new group viewed the rest of DE&S; and also in the way that the other Operating Centres viewed the group and the way that the group performed its role. This tension and ability to identify where a group had originated was repeated across DE&S.

But in that previous existence, those group cultures were part of the DPA or the DLO. Their history was lost on new-comers, being only accessible as corporate memory that could guide the newcomer through the multi-cultural maze of DPA and DLO sub-cultures, for example: the first informant said that: *'if you go into some of our teams you'll still get the 'that's a DPA team, I'm DLO' (Shaw, 2011h).*

A second informant indicated that:

*'I think that the process of assimilation into a DE&S single viewpoint had not yet quite reached its conclusion. One tends to find that the Abbey Wood contingent, especially those who were DPA and who therefore lived, worked, breathed and died in Abbey Wood still have difficulty understanding the fact that there was life outside the moat [the lake that surrounds Abbeywood site]' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The two previous responses from civil servants, who were, at the time of the interviews working in the same group in Operating Centre B. This was a predominantly policy and bureaucracy based cross cutting Operating Centre. Both were C1 grade civil servants, one had recently joined that group from Operating Centre C, the other had been in the group for some time. Their

responses were highly congruent, even though the respondents were historically from functionally contrasting Operating Centres.

Tensions between the social and the technical cultures in DE&S were observed during the research period, five years after the DPA and the DLO were merged, thus showing its strength and longevity. The reasons for this DE&S appeared to be complex. One of the reasons for the existence of this tension between the old and the new in all of its forms may, as was shown in section 5.2.2, be the lack of induction into DE&S at the time of its creation. In essence, when a person arrived in DE&S, or a group within DE&S, or when DE&S was created from the DPA and the DLO, group members brought with them their prior experiences, perceptions, and external cultural influences.

The importation of acquired behaviours was called in the vernacular language of DE&S *baggage*, as is described by a B1 grade civil servant from Operating Centre A:

*‘They successfully brought the [team] in, and integrated it into the organisational structure. However, if you chose to have baggage you would still see it. The old [team]. If people chose to see it, they could see it’* (Shaw, 2011h).

That team were brought into DE&S as a joint team composed of DPA and DLO staff. Because, in this instance, the DPA and the DLO had previously tried to implement what that team did, each group had their own ideas of how it should work in DE&S, and these ideas were not necessarily compatible. It was because of this factor that the team did not appear to work well as a team, and therefore the project at that time was not a success.

The word *baggage* was also noted in a conversation referring to the respondent’s time in pre-DE&S organisations: *‘I probably carry some baggage as a result’* (Shaw, 2012l). This is confirmed by a B2 grade civil servant in relation to a change of Team Leader that occurred subsequent to the merger: *‘Doesn’t have*

30 years baggage of [team x]' (Shaw, 2011h). This may indicate that some individuals recognized that they could be personally responsible for the tension, which was a result of their previous experiences and knowledge. This prior experience and knowledge could, of course, be positive or negative, depending on the situation and how the knowledge and experience were deployed.

Tensions between the old and new process and technical cultures, or “ways of working” also appeared to exist in addition to the tensions between the social cultures. This tension appeared to be caused through organisational systems and processes not changing, such as where old work processes and practices were carried into DE&S. This is described by a B1 grade civil servant Team Leader in Operating Centre D:

*‘If they give me another DPA centric spreadsheet and get grumpy when I go back and say, ‘I don’t like how this was structured because I’m trying to break the team structure down’, and all you’re doing was giving me readiness checklists that perpetuate the team structure. Now I know the IT guys were here in DPA times, but they haven’t moved on, so there’s actually the underbelly of the organisation hasn’t gone away and for as long as the infrastructure and the life support systems perpetuate that...’*  
(Shaw, 2011h).

This exhibition of this tension between the processes, and also the thinking of the DPA and that of DE&S appeared to reflect on the credibility of the group that promoted the old processes, as the group did not appear to change their functional culture to be congruent with the new organisational culture. It appears therefore, that this unwillingness to change may not be solely perpetrated by personal agency, but that organisational processes might also have played a part. If processes and supporting systems, such as technology do not change, especially within an organisational merger, then this could have acted as a contributory factor that allowed this tension between the old and the new



organisational cultures to occur in DE&S. This tension was likely to act as a braking factor on organisational change programmes.

These social and technical tensions also appeared to manifest themselves through group members, or indeed whole groups, using processes, or forms from precursor organisations, instead of using DE&S process structures. This was seen in for example, forms that were used by some staff in one Operating Centre to report annual leave. These were from the RNSTS, (Royal Naval Stores and Transport Service), which had been part of the DLO which was subsumed into The Warship Support Agency (Shaw, 2010g). The form that should have been used was a DE&S form or the DE&S electronic system.<sup>83</sup>

The use of these forms implies that psychologically, the group members appeared to be still, in a day to day sense, working in the *old* organisation, because not only had their job not changed, but their phone number and desk remained the same and the artefacts and people that they were surrounded by remained the same as well (Shaw, 2013e). But also this tension might have been partially legitimised by the group member's management, who did not want to use new forms, for example, or by DE&S itself, by issuing the instructions to use up all of the old forms before new ones were produced in order to save money (Shaw, 2011ab).

Geographical identity also appeared to play a part in creating tensions between group cultures. The following response from a C1 civil servant from Operating Centre C, describes what happened in the area that he worked in, when a group moved en masse into his area: *'They all huddle together, they use their own processes, eat together and go to lunch together, it's as if they don't really want to be part of the team'* (Shaw, 2010m). That new group had moved from Andover to Abbeywood, and appeared to have kept their desks together. They had also

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<sup>83</sup> HRMS – Human Resources Management System.

retained their own technical processes and social groups, rather than integrating into Abbeywood technically and socially.

The tensions between geographical cultures DE&S could also be symbolised by the appearance of gate guardians (Shaw, 2010n) as local territory marking mechanisms, these have been described in section 4.4. These were often local instantiations of either precursor, or *other* cultures, such as in the collocation of groups from outlying stations such as Wyton, Foxhill, Andover, and Ensleigh, where a group was transplanted into Abbeywood as a whole, bringing with them all of their local culture and their previous group and geographical identity, without being socialised into the new culture. These groups, their gate guardians and also other territory marking symbols appeared on floor-plates in Abbeywood as a result of the work to collocate groups into Abbeywood (Shaw, 2010b).

These tensions between the old and new organisational cultures appeared to be long lasting. A C1 grade civil servant who was an internal consultant in late 2010 indicates this: *'I mean they came together about five years ago, something like that, and for a good two to three years people were still 'oh that's the old DPA lot', it happens a lot less now'* (Shaw, 2011j). This view chimes with that expressed by a B1 grade Team Leader from Operating Centre D: *'Instead of the big barrier we've got lots of little barriers between Operating Centres and groups'* (Shaw, 2011h). This echoes the response given by respondent Abw 32 (Shaw, 2011h) of there being fences around groups within DE&S where, instead of the real and perceived gap that had existed between the DPA and the DLO.

This tension appeared to be persistent within DE&S, and its existence may have acted to reinforce negative group behaviours. A C1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre B describes this through his view of the insularity and distinctiveness of a group that was apparent for some time post-merger. Their interview was conducted in 2011, four years after the merger: *'for a long time there was still an invisible sort of insular Chinese wall between the ex-DPA types and the ex-DLO types'* (Shaw, 2011h).

Cultural tensions did not appear to be limited to any particular staff grade or functional group. The leadership group could also be responsible for hindering the organisational changes in DE&S. This was most clearly visible through the power struggle over which process culture should become the dominant one: *'some of the 1\*s and B1s appear to be rebuilding the IPT [Defence Procurement Agency Integrated Project Team] structures'* (Shaw, 2011h). This response from a B1 grade Team Leader, describes how, in Operating Centre D, some ex DPA (Defence Procurement Agency), IPT (Integrated Project Team) leaders were trying to re-build DPA organisational structures in DE&S, where the IPT structure had been intellectually, but not physically dismantled through the creation of Operating Centres in DE&S.

This appears to be one indication that where these tensions existed, organisational change might not occur in the way that it was intended. In this instance, instead of getting 'One DE&S', it appears that the DPA was being rebuilt within an area of DE&S.

Cultural tension also appeared at the boundary between either civilian groups or military/ civilian groups. This was then manifest as a lack of understanding when a group member was moving, for example, from a military environment, to a civilian one. Cultural tensions could also result in some inappropriate behaviour between military, ex-military personnel and civilian staff. The following response is from a C1 civil servant:

*'Talking about tribalism, something yesterday that I have never heard of before, never seen before and it must be totally an Army thing. I went over to the main site with the Colonel and the Colonel was walking through the buildings and stuff like that and as he was walking through the buildings, all the soldiers were standing up and saluting him. And I have never seen that before. Never. I was shocked because I couldn't believe that just as he was walking through they were standing and saluting him, sitting down, standing and saluting. Where does that come from? Where does that*

*come from on an MOD site? That does not happen. You know? And it's because he's got his flashes on and that's what I said to you earlier on. That's his behaviour and that's his expectation'* (Shaw, 2011h).

This tension between military and civil service cultures in this way may have occurred because military personnel did not consistently receive an induction into DE&S. As a result they may not have known how to behave in DE&S, as a primarily civilian workplace as opposed to a military workplace. So it appears that one of the consequences of military personnel not experiencing any induction into DE&S. This could lead to military personnel to be culturally inept rather than adept in relation to the culture of DE&S.

This tension and inappropriate behaviour appears to be a low-level form of cultural drag, as described by Kirke as a '*slowing down of change through lack of cooperation by the work force who tend to look back to how things were and drag their feet in transition to the new state of affairs desired by their management*' (Kirke, 2010 p 98).

### **5.5.1 Summary of Cultural Drag**

The research identified the existence of multiple levels of cultural drag which was in agreement with the work of Kirke (2010) and also of Ogburn (1964). Cultural drag was observed as being linked to multiple other cultures, including those of the DPA and the DLO. Those cultures and sub-cultures were long lasting, because they had a history, and as Hofstede indicates, any organisation that has a history is constrained in its future behaviours (1980 p 27 ). Two types of cultural drag were identified within DE&S, both types conformed to the socio-technical and the socio-cultural cultural axes that have been used throughout this research. Cultural drag was found to exist within a hierarchy of cultures in DE&S that included a series of institutional cultures.

It appears that the tensions between groups in DE&S resulted from socio-cultural processes such as new group members not being effectively integrated into the

social culture of the group, but also by socio-technical pressures. This is where underpinning organisational processes do not change and are maintained inappropriately in the new organisation or after the organisational change. One element appears to link the examples of cultural drag that have been presented thus far in section 5.5.2, that is induction and specifically induction as an element of organisational change. The reason for this assertion is as follows. When an organisation changes it may seek to change its organisational processes at the same time as it changes its organisational structures, but If either it takes some time for those process changes to be agreed and then communicated to the process managers and users, then they are likely to communicate and use the old processes during a longer than expected or understood transition. In using the 'old' processes users will also be using 'old' ways of working and interacting with those processes while in the 'new' organisation, perhaps for a considerable period of time. This was in the case in DE&S when 'old' processes were still in use 6 years after the creation of the 'new' organisation.

Where this occurs it is likely to slow the pace of organisational change from the 'old' to the 'new', so being one factor that both affects an organisational culture and creates socio-technical cultural drag. This instance of drag links the socio-technical interactions of people and processes with the socio-cultural, as people still use their 'old' ways of working and do not change to the new ways.

The appearance of cultural drag in DE&S appeared to be aided through the lack of understanding of senior managers of the importance and effect of organisational culture on the success of the merger of the DPA and the DLO.

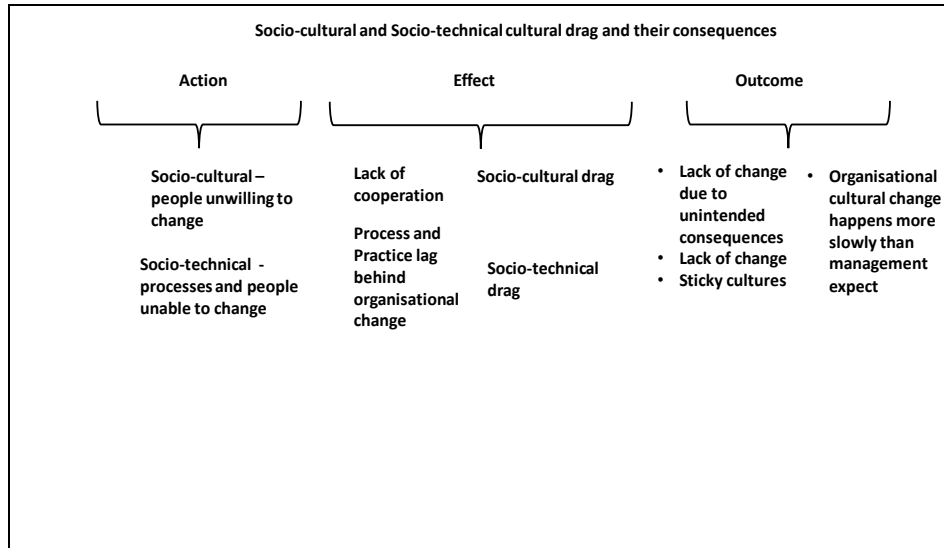
A further example that shows how elements of the DE&S organisational culture appear to have aided cultural drag centre around the manifestation of identity in groups. As shown in section 4.3 identity in the context of organisational change possesses a socio-technical element in that one organisational identity is removed and another one is imposed on group members, both organisationally and symbolically. It is also a socio-cultural drag because some members may

not want to identify with the new organisation. This socio-cultural drag appears to have a link to the law of unintended consequences as this behaviour means that some people do not behave as managers expect them to in that situation.

So in order to counter cultural drag or cultural tensions between the 'old' and the 'new' and to make the management of change more effective, any manager who is responsible for managing organisational change should identify and understand the factors that affect the organisational culture that they are working within. This will then enable them to identify and devise effective interventions that induct and socialise staff into the socio-technical culture and socio-cultural norms of the new organisation, otherwise organisational change will not occur. The lack of identification and understanding of these factors may be one of the reasons that as Barton (2011) identifies organisational change has a habit of failure in Defence Acquisition.

This can then be represented graphically and figure 5-2 presents a conceptual model of cultural drag, its antecedents and effects in DE&S.

Moving from left to right across the figure, people, the socio, may react against the organisation, the technical, the action of the drag is provided by the people. This then might be called socio-cultural drag, because it is the people slowing the organisation down, perhaps being unwilling participants to the change. Also if as shown, organisational processes do not change sufficiently quickly, this may provide the reason for socio-technical drag, causing people to be unable to change and fulfil any new organisational cultural or behavioural requirements.



**Figure 5-2 Model of Cultural Drag and Its Consequences**

Source Derek Shaw

Chapter 6 now provides a conceptualisation and characterisation of the organisational cultures and ethos of DE&S.

## **6 DE&S Organisational Culture and Ethos: in Harmony, or Conflict**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This research set out to describe and explain factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S between 2007 and 2015. Chapters 4 and 5 have described and explained some of those factors, Chapter 6 reports on how the DE&S organisational culture and how this was represented by informants and was affected by the attributes that were described throughout chapters 4 and 5.

#### **6.1.1 DE&S Organisational Culture**

Chapters 4 and 5 have presented a series of attributes that groups possessed, such as identity, size and membership, which combined with factors such as induction socialisation and team building have implied that DE&S did not possess one single organisational culture but was a multi-cultural organisation. It also shows that there was a value, or ethos that breached the bureaucratic culture of DE&S. Section 6.1.1 shows how this multiplicity of cultures manifested itself.

**Finding: DE&S did not have single, identifiable organisational culture.**

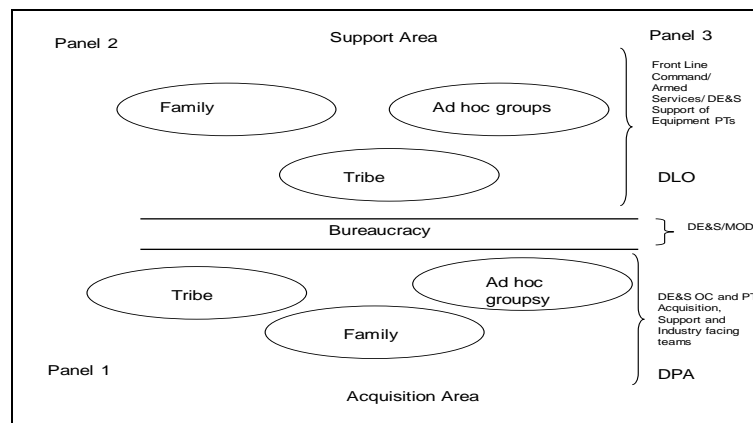
*‘DE&S doesn’t have an organisational culture, you have to grow a culture, and DE&S isn’t allowed to grow one, it just reacts’ (Shaw, 2015a).*

That comment, from a C1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre D was indicative of a groundswell of opinion in DE&S. It came as part of a conversation after the researcher and the informant were making sense of a change readiness workshop that they had both attended as part of the preparation for the new Bespoke Trading Entity (BTE) in 2015. The fact that there was such a feeling within employees indicates that in DE&S employees were aware that there was no single organisational culture that could be identified as being DE&S, but DE&S reacted to whatever it was asked to do by government. That reaction may have been part of the organisational culture. It was not the organisational culture. It



was more likely to be a value or an attribute of being aligned to the super-ordinate goal, of supporting the front-line.

Figure 6-1 shows at a meta-level the cultures that were extant in DE&S and also those that existed prior to the existence of DE&S. It also shows how these cultures persisted within DE&S through the imposition of DE&S via the merger of the DPA and the DLO.



**Figure 6-1 A Conceptual View of the Organisational Culture of DE&S**

Source: Derek Shaw 2012-2015

**Legend:** Panel 1 shows a conceptualisation of some of the group labels that were found in DE&S. These conceptual labels, such as tribe and ad hoc groups were taken from the vernacular language that was used in DE&S. Cameron and Quinn (1999 p 54) also use those terms in other organisations, thus providing a degree of coincidence to the findings of this research in DE&S. The position of this panel indicates the proximity of these groups to the concept of acquisition and industry. They are thus indicative of being ex-DPA groups and of being further away from the supporting elements of defence, and thus ‘the front line’.

**Legend:** Panel 2 shows a conceptualisation of some of the other groups that were found in DE&S. These conceptual labels, such as tribe were also taken from the vernacular language that was used in DE&S. The position of this panel

indicates the proximity of these groups to the concept of support, and 'the front line', they are thus indicative of being ex-DLO groups.

**Legend:** Panel 3 provides the formal organisational labels for these groups.

**Legend: Bureaucracy**, this bar indicates the concept of the bureaucracy that was imposed onto the DPA and the DLO when they were merged.

The group cultures and types shown in figure 6-1 cultures were characterised through vernacular language, organisational function, and group purpose. Figure 6-1 conceptualises the reality of the multiple organisational cultural types that were extant in DE&S as seen by DE&S staff. Each of these groups possessed their own identities which were visible to other groups.

For example, a B1 grade Military Officer in Operating Centre J describes the DPA and the DLO in a manner that matches the model, in speaking of the difference between *outputs* and the *centre* that he had encountered during several tours in *acquisition*:

*'.. the cultures within those groups have been very diverse, given that they've come from different backgrounds, DLO and DPA, which had different cultures and those which were output driven and those which were centre driven' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The reasons for the socio-technical and also the socio-cultural differences between the DPA and the DLO can be explained by the differences between their outputs and their relative closeness to either the operational military or to industry. The following respondent was a military officer in Operating Centre E:

*'So the need to combine the two organisations made sense. There was never any sense in having one (the DPA) that bought stuff and threw it over a wall, (for DLO to support) so it made sense to combine it, I think that was a good move' (Shaw, 2011h).*

These organisations also had fundamentally different reasons for their existence. The DPA was the Defence Procurement Agency: it specified and worked with industry to procure defence equipment. In terms of types of cultural characteristics and definitions, Figure 6-1 conceptualises DE&S as a hamburger shaped organisation. This representation shows the extant cultures of previous organisational incarnations, the DPA and the DLO with an added layer of bureaucracy separating the two that was imposed as *joint organisational processes*. These were the corporate elements, through the imposition of the DE&S. This bridged the gap between the DPA and the DLO, instead of actually merging them.

The following B2 grade civil servant describes the corporate joining of the two organisations and his feelings as one of the team that was responsible for the merger:

*'I knew damn well that we were having duplicate resources and I think battles with the DLO side were quite absolutely unnecessary. To join us together at that corporate level made an awful lot of sense for me'* (Shaw, 2011p).

A C1 grade civil servant in Operating Centre A confirmed this:

*'It was bringing together both the DPA and the DLO into one organization to deliver an efficient and effective service to the front line'* (Shaw, 2011h).

Some members were therefore comfortable with the thought of working in a new joint organisation, DE&S, because they thought that would help to improve the equipment and support that was provided to *the front line*.

This would suggest that there would be no cultural drag, but it actually introduces a paradox, because cultural drag was indeed exhibited, even though people knew the merger was a good idea. It took a long time to get the two organisations working together, suggesting that the precursor cultures were not sufficiently understood by senior management and change leaders in order to socialise

people, either socio-technically or socio-culturally into the new organisational construct of DE&S. The effects of this were shown in section 5.2.2.

A Naval Captain in Operating Centre J characterises the differences between the DPA and the DLO, and also the paradox:

*'...I think the DPA [Defence Procurement Agency] had been very much formed in cultural terms by the IPT [integrated Project Team] concept, the IPT concept had a lot to commend it particularly in a self-contained project. Project managers were given a performance cost and time boundary, and that led to teams which were very focussed and inward looking. Inward looking can be a negative, but probably a stronger ethic was the focussed bit. They were focussed on delivering their outputs, sometimes to the detriment to the greater good but having been part of that organisation that wasn't visible to people within those projects. The DLO was a much more amorphous organisation, and partly because of what it had come from, providing support and support was a very varied commodity, support to a platform, support to an equipment were very different' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The informant characterises the cultures of the DPA and the DLO that normalised historical group behaviours. The response also indicates how organisational behaviour could be a contributory factor in personal behaviour and may have led to cultural drag as there were different processes that were used to achieve the same outcome in different parts of *acquisition*, the DPA, and *support*, the DLO.

One of the key differentiators that were observed within the DPA and DLO organisational cultures were the characterisation of the functions of the groups and also the group structures.

Both of these factors contributed to how groups behaved in their respective organisations. It appears then, that the creation of DE&S did not immediately achieve a single organisation, either socio-culturally or socio-technically. This may be as a consequence of how the new organisation was imposed onto people

as the merger was frequently received cynically by employees, or because of the difference in the cultures of the DPA and the DLO.

The effect of this chimes with the findings of Wanous (2000), on factors that affect employees' cynicism to organisational change. As a result, there were, and remain, boundaries and fracture lines in-between the old DPA and DLO

It appears that there was a consistent theme that was observed across five Operating Centres and four geographical locations. This was that the cultures of the DPA and the DLO were still in existence as process, physical and psychological cultural entities, they were sub-cultures in DE&S. The cultures and the cultural boundaries were subtle and pervasive. The historical major differences between the DPA and the DLO became differences between Chief of Materiel areas and between Operating Centres.

There were some differences that remained as tensions as the ex-DLO teams were also thought by some staff to be closer to the front line than were the ex-DPA teams.

*'I am here to support the front line. I may not be doing it directly, although a couple of years ago I got an invite to go to Camp Bastion, it reminded me forcibly how far I've been moved away from front line since I started my work [in DLO]. But that's my function (in DE&S), I support the front line' (Shaw, 2011h).*

The respondent, a C1 grade civil servant who had previously been a member of the DPA and also of the DLO indicates that he felt divorced from the front line on moving to DE&S. His view indicates that the strength of identity with the 'front-line', as indicated in section 4.5.1 may be linked to something that Schein (1992) describes as an internal element of organisational culture, that of a value.

*'But I was always aware when I was working in what was the DLO, of the split with DPA and it was always a source of frustration that you had a separate organisation running things like acquisition programmes that, in*

*my view at the time they didn't understand in service support. As far as I was concerned DLO understood in-service support, DPA knew about acquisition, but didn't know how to buy things for an existing platform'* (Shaw, 2011h).

The feeling of being distanced physically and psychologically from the front line was echoed in many ex-DLO teams, who perceived DPA teams to be distanced from what the *lads and lasses* on the front line needed. In addition to military and civil service cultures, groups in DE&S could also possess professional cultures based around their function. The following example from a C2 civil servant encapsulates the complexity and the multi-cultural nature of DE&S through the use of metaphors that were found within the DE&S lexicon:

*'Certainly amongst the three services, there's intense tribalism. They were very parochial. There's also to a...what's the word?...I would say lesser extent, various specialisms within the civilian's side, contracts people stick together because of the commercial nature of their job, all people tend to be a very close group. I worked in Quality Assurance for a while which was also very friendly family focused group, went across IPT (Integrated Project Team) boundaries because we were functionally reporting to the head of Quality. So there's definitely tribalism in groups'* (Shaw, 2011i).

This view then reinforces the conceptual model of Figure 5-1, where there were multiple social and technical cultures in DE&S, not simply the military and civilian cultures. Because of this differentiation, each domain and Operating Centre possessed a technical and social culture that differed from any other Operating Centre. These cultures were supported by factors such as group distinctiveness. These have been described throughout this research, and were supported by the vernacular language which described these groups and cultures as *tribes*, or *families*, and enabled the creation of boundaries between groups, their differences and heightening the feeling of cultural difference between the groups. These groups could also be characterised culturally as described by DE&S

members through their socio-technical characteristics and also through the sub-groups of which they were composed, as either *Project Teams*, or *corporate teams*, *bureaucratic resources* and that they do *different stuff*.

Because of this functional differentiation, each domain and Operating Centre possessed a different socio-technical culture in addition to being different socio-culturally.

## **6.2 Ethos: The Power of Commitment and the Shadow of Bureaucracy.**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

Section 6.1 has shown that DE&S is a multi-organisational cultural organisation. Section 6.2 describes the single unifying and also the most important factor in DE&S, its ethos. It does this by presenting narrative and conceptual representations that were developed from the data.

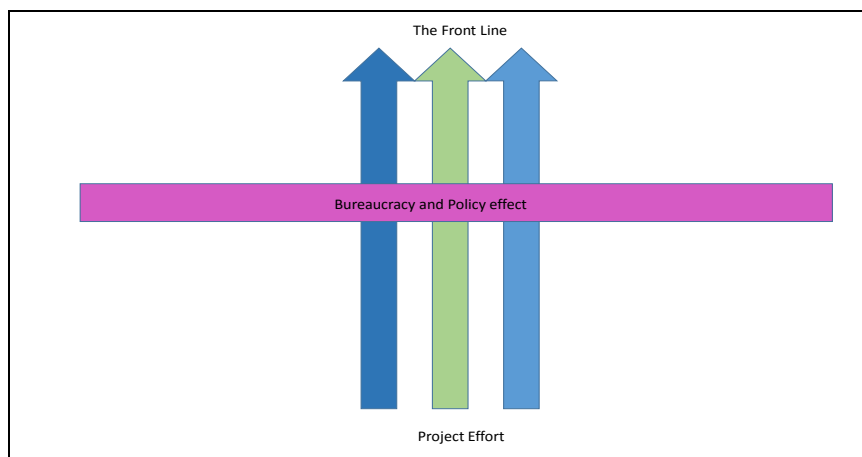
### **6.2.2 Culture or Ethos**

*“Greek, Sociology, the fundamental character or spirit of a culture; the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, or practices of a group or society; dominant assumptions of a people or period”* (Dictionary, 2014).

Ethos is not the same as culture. Tylor suggested that culture (is) *“that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”* (Tylor, 1871 p 1). Ethos may also be confused with culture, in that *‘the way that we do things around here’*, can be represented as an ethos, when in fact it is a statement of cultural rules or norms. Ethos may therefore be interpreted as being an artefact of culture, and as Schein indicates an internal factor of a culture, as opposed to being an external factor (Schein, 1990).

While this research has identified that there was no single DE&S organisational culture, there did appear to be a single ethos, or core value that appeared to be present throughout all grades, Operating Centres and Teams. That ethos could be characterised as one of putting the ‘front-line first’.

The construction of a bi-directional cultural model of DE&S, Figure 6-2, which was based on function and output was demonstrated by the following observation in a *lessons learned*<sup>84</sup> meeting in April 2012. An attendee from the bureaucratic commercial function put his hands up in a cross shape and described each element as pictured below, independently of the researcher’s work.



**Figure 6-2 Differences: Project Effort and Bureaucratic Culture and Effect.**

Source: Derek Shaw 2012-2015

**Legend:** The horizontal stripe represents the bureaucratic effort, or culture, that was viewed by informants as being DE&S and MOD driven. This is a predominantly Civil Service culture, as it is the functional element of the bureaucracy.

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<sup>84</sup> Lessons Learned was a defined DE&S process that identifies and extracts positive and negative project management practice.



The vertical stripe bars represent the effort made by the project teams to keep the armed services, their customers, supplied with the right equipment. The bureaucratic axis cuts across the project axis.

The contrast between the two directions was further illustrated by a quotation from a *fireside chat* given by a 2\* Civil Servant in Operating Centre D, where the concept of '*both core deliveries and the bureaucracy*'<sup>85</sup> was described. This indicates that this model of project versus bureaucracy was widely recognized in DE&S. It appears that DE&S acted as a layer between the acquisition teams and the support teams, slowing down project delivery and using project resource to report to management, rather than to deliver project outputs. This bureaucracy was associated with the civil service, not with the military, or with the *project*.

This view chimes with the conceptual view of DE&S that was proposed in Figure 6-1, section 6.1.1 where DE&S was the bureaucracy that bridged the DPA and the DLO, without creating a real merger of the two organisations.

This model was recognized by both bureaucratic staffs and project staff as a useful and valid model through which the organisational culture and ethos of DE&S could be discussed. While the bureaucracy of DE&S supported and enabled the delivery of equipment, projects appeared to perceive that the bureaucracy '*got in the way*' of them doing '*the day job*', and thus as cutting across their project effort.

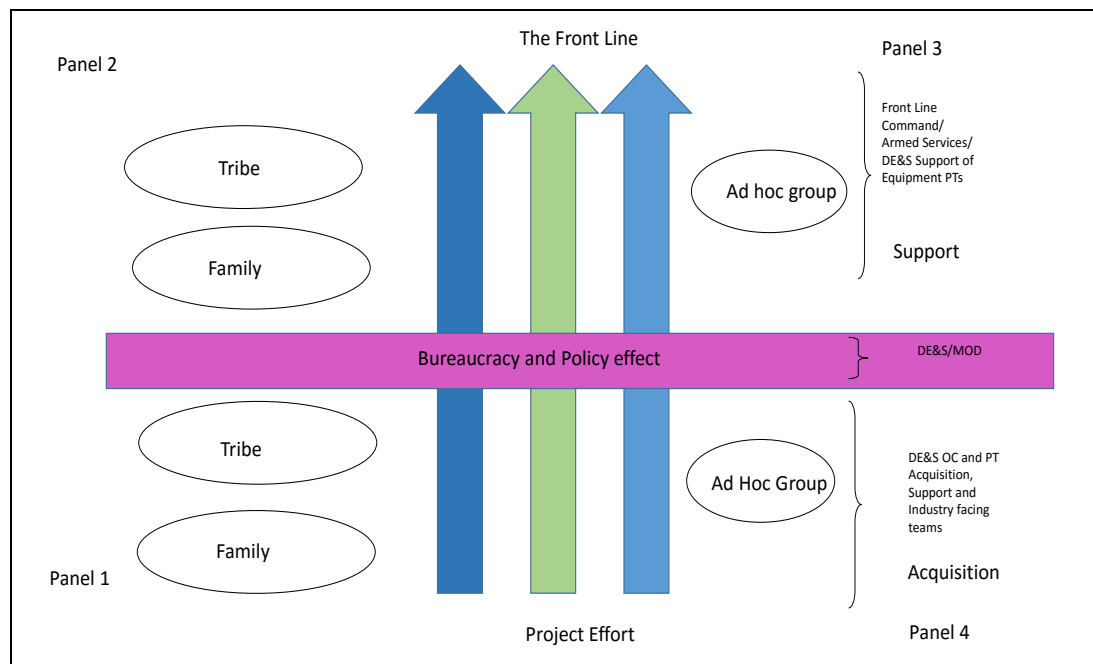
The ethos and cultural elements of DE&S that were shown in Figure 6-2 can be easily imposed on the model in Figure 6-1 without contradiction. The vertical bar of Figure 6-2 appeared to coincide with the primarily DLO manufactured ethos of '*from factory to foxhole*', which was reified by DPA staff, who very strongly supported '*the lads and lasses on the front line*'.

Figure 6-1, Figure 6-2, and Figure 6-4 have presented single concept views of the organisational cultures and the ethos of DE&S. This leads to a representation

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<sup>85</sup> The Big Picture for the (OC D) Change Programme 15 May 2013.

of the multiple organisational cultures, the relationship of the 'front-line first' ethos and the effect of the DE&S bureaucracy which is shown in Figure 6-3



**Figure 6-3 Model of the Organisational Culture and Ethos of DE&S**

Source: Derek Shaw 2012-2015

**Legend:** **Bureaucracy**, this bar indicates the concept of the bureaucracy that was imposed onto the DPA and the DLO when they were merged and it represents what DE&S was for many people at that time, and it represents the bureaucratic effort that was viewed by informants as being DE&S and MOD driven. The vertical bars represent the effort made by the project teams to keep the armed services, their customers, supplied with the right equipment.

**Legend:** Panel 1 shows a conceptualisation of some of the group types that were found in DE&S. These conceptual labels such as tribe and adhocracy, were taken from the vernacular language that was used in DE&S. The position of this panel indicates the proximity of these groups to the concept of acquisition and industry, they are thus indicative of being ex-DPA groups and of being further away from the supporting elements of defence, and thus 'the front line'.

**Legend:** Panel 2 shows a conceptualisation of some of the group types that were found in DE&S. These conceptual labels such as tribe, were taken from the vernacular language that was used in DE&S. The position of this panel indicates the proximity of these groups to the concept of support, and ‘the front line’, they are thus indicative of being ex-DLO groups.

**Legend:** Panels 3 and 4 provides the formal organisational labels for these groups, where they reside in the DE&S ethos in terms of ‘acquisition’, or ‘support’.

The horizontal element was the *controllerate*<sup>86</sup> or bureaucratic effort and culture.

Both of these views were expressed as contradicting the bureaucracy, which was expressed as being *an overhead*, and stopping people from doing their jobs.<sup>87</sup> The DPA and DLO multiple Project Team cultures bridged the bureaucracy of DE&S in order to deliver equipment to the front-line, despite, rather than because of DE&S.

Across the data it appeared to be recognized that within any military domain, civil servants could be brought into the broader grouping of that domain:

*‘I see the civil service as serving all. And you align with whoever you’re working with for at that time. So if you’re in a D-Ships team at that stage you’re aligned to the Navy and great numbers of people change jobs and go off and work for Land. At which stage they become a Land civil servant. Just as if I were an Air engineer working on Storm Shadow and the Storm Shadow team leader, I don’t know who he is at the moment, but for a number of years it was a Naval Captain, I think probably aligned himself with the Royal Air Force. So I might be wrong, but if you are output team based then I think civil servants align with whichever service they’re outputting to. Of course there’s the semi-amorphous mass in the middle of the supporting groups, the airline tour they’re not aligned to Land, Sea*

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<sup>86</sup> Language from the Pre DPA, Procurement executive.

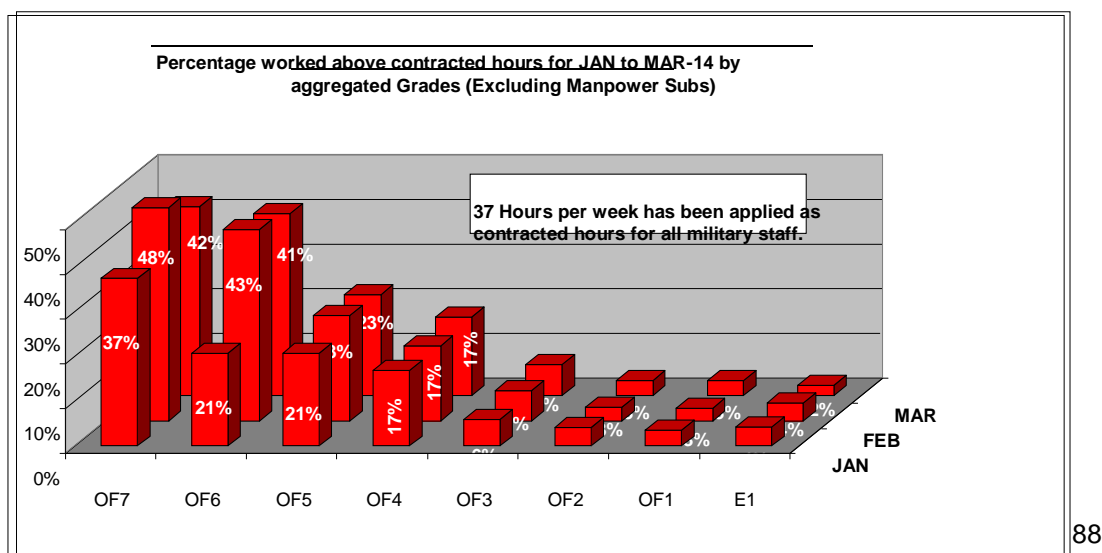
<sup>87</sup> This model and the discussion on linguistic frameworks within DE&S were presented in section 4.7.

*or Air they're aligned to the general greater good so in a sense my answer is very output team focussed'* (Shaw, 2011q).

This positive view of civil servants appeared to be because, it was stated, if you work with us in any way you become *one of us*, i.e., the military, not a civil servant, and therefore not different to *us*. This view appeared to be common across services.

This factor of identification and cultural assimilation was also identified by Kirke (2012) in the wider MOD in relation to the RAF and civil servants who worked in the RAF domain. Therefore, it appears that civil servants were thought, because they were the bureaucracy, to be adaptable to work with any service. This appears also to imply a degree of cultural agnosticism. It also indicates that groups and individuals were able to create *the other* in DE&S in terms of who did the work, and who was a corporate overhead, a paper pusher. This finding also agrees with the concept of a bi-directional culture/ethos model of DE&S, using *project effort* and *bureaucratic effort* as the bi-directional elements in Figure 6-2.

This model then implies that as an organisation, DE&S was the bureaucracy, as opposed to the projects that directly supported the front line and that the ethos that group members espoused was to support the frontline. Further reinforcing the multiplicity of organisational cultures within DE&S, with a characterisation of a bureaucratic culture and a project culture as being different from each other.



**Figure 6-4 Discretionary Effort as Unpaid Overtime in Operating Centre L.<sup>89</sup>**

Source: DE&S Time Recording And Charging Data. (TRAC).

Figure 6-4 was derived directly from DE&S corporate data from Operating Centre L during the first quarter of 2014.

It shows that in this Operating Centre all grades of employee worked more hours than they were conditioned to work, conditioned hours being 37 hours per week. Lower grades worked fewer hours of unpaid overtime, or discretionary effort, than did middle grades, or senior managers in this Operating Centre. The data were gathered from the Time Recording tool that was deployed in preparation for *hard-charging*<sup>90</sup> of employees' time to projects. Figure 6-4, while a true representation of the effort provided by staff, does not explain the reasons behind the amount of unpaid overtime being worked in that Operating Centre. It may be that in this Operating Centre staff need to work overtime because there was a genuine need in terms of project outputs, or it may be that staff are struggling to produce outputs because of the amount of bureaucracy that is imposed on them by DE&S.

<sup>88</sup> DE&S Corporate Data from Time Recording Pilot switch on meeting September 2014.

<sup>89</sup> OF 6/7 = SCS, OF 4/5 = B1 grade/7, OF 2/3 = C1/C2, E1 = AA/AO grades, ref table 3 – 3.

<sup>90</sup> Hard Charging was being introduced to DE&S as a way of assigning true costs to project effort.

This is the power of commitment to getting the job done despite the bureaucratic requirements or 'culture' of DE&S and supporting *the front line*, and is the overwhelming ethos within DE&S. That ethos functions despite the multiplicity of organisational and group cultures and their tensions.

### **6.2.3 Summary**

Chapter 6 has linked chapters 4 and 5 to each other showing how the research question: '*What were the factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S?*' has been answered. It shows how those factors included: identity, group size, metaphors, socialisation and cultural tension or as Kirke (2010) describes it, cultural drag. It has also shown that there was no single organisational culture that existed in DE&S, but that there appears to have been a single ethos, that of 'front-line-first'.

These cultures consisted of technical cultures where the 'old' DPA and DLAO processes were still used in DE&S, or where functional cultures such as 'commercial' processes, where a set of functional rules existed, creating a distinct group. Organisational cultures were also visible in Operating centres and as shown in sections 4.3, 4.4 and 4.7 each was linguistically, geographically and functionally different from other Operating Centres.

DE&S also possessed two other major cultural types, the Civil Service and the military and these groups could be characterised through language. They were made more distinctive through differences in their functional rules, MOD (2004), MOD (2007), MOD (1998), (2006). There were also differences in dress codes between military and civilian personnel MOD (2004), Bain (2008) and a combination of functional and cultural differences that caused tension and the development of stereotypes, as was shown in section 4.3.8.

The existence of the vernacular group labels as described in section 4.7 was represented graphically in Figure 6-1 to indicate where in the overall conception

of Defence Acquisition and support on the continuum between the *'factory and the foxhole'* these groups and their cultures lay

It was clear from the data in section 4.5 that group members identified very strongly with the *'front-line'*. The language that was used expressed an ethos of *'front-line first'* and was balanced by the expression of DE&S as being the bureaucratic culture. This was shown in section 4.7. This dichotomy is represented in Figure 6-2 as a bi-directional model of project effort versus bureaucratic effort. This means that a unified cultural model of DE&S can be created by overlaying those individual models on each other, as is shown in Figure 6-3. This model indicates how the merger of the DPA and the DLO added DE&S as the bureaucratic zipper that joined the two organisations together, and that the merger was not a true merger but an imposition of a set of functional rules on the DPA and the DLO in an attempt to make them work together as one coherent organisation to acquire equipment and support the UK armed forces.

Underlying the organisational cultures of DE&S Figures 6-2 and 6-3 show a conceptualisation of the ethos of the staff in project teams as a project and delivery behaviour and how that behaviour breaches the bureaucratic culture of DE&S, which is a reporting and controlling activity.

The effect of the tension between the ethos and the culture within DE&S is then seen in the TRAC<sup>91</sup> shown in Figure 6-4. This figure indicates how staff were affected by the tension between delivery and bureaucracy by the amount of time that is recorded as unpaid overtime. This suggests that the power of commitment is stronger than the shadow of bureaucracy, but staff have to work longer hours, not because of the amount of delivery work, but because of the amount of bureaucratic tasks that get in the way of them doing their day jobs. This is the power of commitment to getting the job done despite the bureaucratic requirements or *culture* of DE&S and supporting *the front line* and is the

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<sup>91</sup> Time Recording And Charging – a system of recording the amount of time that staff spend on their activities.

overwhelming ethos within DE&S. That ethos functions despite the multiplicity of organisational and group cultures and their inherent tensions.

Chapter 7 will now test those findings.





## **7 Testing the Findings**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapters 4 to 6 have reported the findings of the research that answered the question, '*What factors affected the organisational culture of DE&S? between 2008 and 2014?*'.

Chapter 7 now tests those findings. The findings are firstly presented in a table, with a note of the section in which they were presented. Accompanying this is a note of the perceived importance of that finding to the research as measured by the number of times the concept was mentioned by informants or identified through observations. Each section in chapter 7 starts with a description of findings and the concept that those findings relate to. The concept and the subsequent findings are then discussed firstly in relation to prior literature, and then in relation to the results of the testing that was carried out in DE&S and other organisations.

#### **7.1.1 Testing the Findings**

The findings that emerged from the data that were subsequently gathered using that methodology were tested along three axes: by reference to prior literature, by reference to current military/civilian organisations and internally through presentation to members of DE&S. This style of testing chimes with triangulation as described by, for example Jick (1979), and also Olsen (2004).

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Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identity as manifest through social, personal, group, symbolic and geographic identity affected the organisational cultures of DE&amp;S was observed in DE&amp;S through the following series of findings:</li> <li>• At the merger a new corporate identity was conceived that resulted in tension between the old identities of the DPA and the DLO when they were removed.</li> <li>• There was a trajectory to the manifestation of identities in DE&amp;S that started prior to the creation of DE&amp;S on the 1st of April 2007 when the DPA and the DLO merged (MOD, 2006).</li> <li>• Corporate branding and identity extended to labels that indicated the function and location of teams.</li> <li>• Lanyards and badges were used as symbols of identity and these</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4, Sections 4.3-4.5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 124 informants mentioned one or more types of identity. The imposition of identity could be a positive factor in group behaviour, but appeared to be viewed more negatively in DE&amp;S.</li> <li>• Throughout field observations of personal and corporate behaviour identity appeared to be a consistent theme.</li> <li>• The concept of identity appeared to be very important to this research as the external manifestation of an internal value.</li> </ul>

Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<p>symbols could also be divisive among groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress and uniform was used as a proxy to express discontent about changes in terms and conditions in the British Army, with the blame for those changes being put onto civil servants.</li> <li>• The existence of different dress codes led to tension between groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4, Sections 4.3-4.5</li> </ul>	

Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups in DE&amp;S possessed their own language. These dialects could act as a barrier between the group and the outsider. They could also reinforce in-groups. Metaphor was used as a series of vernacular labels to describe groups and their perceived and imagined behaviours.</li> <li>Language changed depending on hierarchical place within DE&amp;S. The language of the Management Boards and the senior grades differed from the language of employees.</li> <li>Language described an emotion state at particular points within the hierarchy of DE&amp;S.</li> <li>There was a pattern of language and a trajectory of linguistic change that was apparent in meetings.</li> <li>Informal language as gossip was observed to exist within informal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 4, section 4.7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35 respondents directly mentioned language as a factor within the culture of DE&amp;S. ~Language appeared to be used to reinforce groups, act as a boundary between a group and the corporate DE&amp;S and vice versa, where it was used to reinforce the corporate world-view.</li> <li>Metaphors were used throughout DE&amp;S. The metaphor of the 'tribe' was directly used by 72 respondents. The metaphor of the family was used directly by 11 respondents. These metaphors appeared to be used consistently in association with defined group sizes.</li> <li>The constant use of these metaphors indicates that they were important to members of DE&amp;S at this time.</li> </ul>

<p>and formal group coherence activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groupings and people's relationships with them were described using shared metaphors.</li> <li>• The words tribe and tribal were used to describe groups and group behaviours. While group members used the word family to describe their teams as a positive attribute, tribe and tribal had a more negative connotation. These were usages pre-dated the formation of DE&amp;S.</li> <li>• The creation of DE&amp;S did not change the way the people used the metaphor of tribe to describe their group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4, section 4.7</li> </ul>	
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Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consistent sizes of teams and groups within the hierarchy of DE&amp;S affected the Organisational Culture of DE&amp;S</li> <li>• Team members were able to recognize the size at which a team stopped being a team and became a group.</li> <li>• 2* organisationally designed stable group sizes (Operating Centres) were consistent within the hierarchy of DE&amp;S, being between 500 and 2500 members.</li> <li>• 1* organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of DE&amp;S.</li> <li>• B1 grade organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of Operating Centre D in DE&amp;S and also Other Operating Centres.</li> <li>• B2 grade organisationally designed group sizes were</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4 section 4.6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team sizes were consistent throughout a sample of the DE&amp;S hierarchy. This consistency indicates that group size played some part in affecting the organisational culture of DE&amp;S.</li> </ul>



<p>consistent within the hierarchy of Operating Centre D in DE&amp;S.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C1 grade organisationally designed group sizes were consistent within the hierarchy of Operating Centre D in DE&amp;S.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4 section 4.6</li> </ul>	
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Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction and socialisation in DE&amp;S were observed through the following findings:</li> <li>• Socio-cultural integration could occur in a group setting in conjunction with formal business.</li> <li>• Informal socialisation into teams was not purely technical or social, but was often a combination of both.</li> <li>• Informal socialisation often occurred in conjunction with food.</li> <li>• Personal cultural adjustments occurred after the temporal boundary between formal and informal socialisation</li> <li>• Formal DE&amp;S induction specified benefits, informal socialisation did not. Outcomes were therefore only specified and agreed by peers and group members.</li> <li>• Group size, gossip and group coherence appeared to be linked by practice and context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 5, sections 5.2 to 5.5.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Induction, socialisation and team-building were viewed as necessary, important and inconsistently practised and experienced within DE&amp;S by 102 respondents. This is confirmed by the four long term observations of team-building events, the observations at informal socialisation and other events and also the induction LFE study that was carried out for Operating Centre D (Shaw, 2011ad).</li> <li>• Inconsistent induction, while not directly affecting the organisational culture of DE&amp;S had some effect on people who became cynical of formal programmes and therefore put more reliance on the informal methods of integrating people into teams and maintaining team-coherence.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As was discovered with induction and socialisation, there were two types of team-building, the formal and the informal.</li> <li>• For a period after the creation of DE&amp;S team-building was not funded.</li> <li>• Team building occurred within a particular group size boundary.</li> <li>• Team building was designed to promote a sense of identity.</li> <li>• Socio-technical and socio-cultural activities and effects were also often conjoined within team-building events (Shaw, 2008-2011).</li> <li>• Team building was a divisive activity if carried out wrongly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 5, sections 5.2 to 5.5.</li> </ul>	
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Finding	Chapter and Section	Perceived importance to Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational culture, cultural drag and also an organisational ethos were observed in DE&amp;S.</li> <li>Cultural drag was recognized in various ways in DE&amp;S</li> <li>Each of the teams and groups within DE&amp;S formed an individual element of the DE&amp;S organisational system, and each possessed a culture that was a sub-set of, and subsidiary to the DE&amp;S organisational culture. The existence of these cultures caused tensions, because each of these different cultures was supported by a subtly different ideology.</li> <li>There was a single ethos in DE&amp;S, that of 'front-line-first'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The concept of tension between cultures, which was exhibited between both extant and old and new cultures was articulated in some way by 47 respondents. This indicates that 'cultural drag' was embedded within the organisational culture of DE&amp;S.</li> <li>The conflict between the ethos of front-line first and the bureaucracy was recognised by DE&amp;S in its mission statement. It was also described in organisational literature, mentioned directly by 35 respondents and recognised by observation. This indicates that the ethos and bureaucracy are both implicit within the DE&amp;S organisational culture and vital components of the culture.</li> </ul>

**Table 7-1 Table of Findings**



## **7.2 Testing in Prior Literature**

The conclusions of the existence of, and the effect of, each contributory factor were tested against relevant prior literature. These contributory factors of identity, language, group size and induction and socialisation were presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **7.2.1 Identity**

**Identity as manifest through social, personal, group, symbolic and geographic identity affected the organisational cultures of DE&S.**

The existence and applicability of identity as a mechanism in social categorisation is discussed in a wide body of literature, Ashforth and Mael (1989), see for example d'Andrade (1984), Ellemers (2005), Fearon (1999), Haslam (2003b), (2001 ), Hogg (2003), (1987) Branscombe et al. (1999). Identity as a concept was discussed in section 2.10. It is therefore no surprise that identity in its many manifestations was observed in DE&S, as it is an organisation that is composed of groups with different characteristics and roles, and literature, and also Cunningham (2007), Ellemers (2005), see for example Paulsen (2003) confirms that groups and group members in organisations each possess multiple attributes of the concept of identity.

The attributes of identity in DE&S were not unique to DE&S, for example, Thornborrow (2001), Pratt (2003), Humphreys (2002) amongst others have shown that symbols such as lanyards, badges and brooches exist as representation of personal and social identity, both in military and non-military environments.

There was a trajectory of identities in DE&S that started with the imposition of the DE&S identity and the removal of the DPA and the DLO identities and which was also marked hierarchically by Operating Centres and Project Teams. This was a forced change, and the effects of the imposition of the new identity, such as high

levels of cynicism amongst staff, chimes with Brown and Cregan (2008), Stanley et al. (2005), Wanous et al. (2004), Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen (2001), Van Leeuwen et al. (2000), Van Leeuwen et al. (2003), Knippenberg et al. (2002). This supports the validity of the finding that identity may form one of the underlying factors that appeared to affect the organisational culture of DE&S through the staff's identification with the old DPA and the DLO, rather than with the new DE&S at that time, thereby creating tension between the old and the new organisations.

One further area of tension was identified through the finding that the uniforms and symbols that were organisationally legitimised within and by DE&S produced and reinforced both pragmatic identities and also social categorisation.

This finding chimes with the work of Pratt and Rafaeli (1997 pp 865-866), and also of Trice and J. (1993), (1984), in non-military organisations, and by Lurie (1981 p 18) who discusses military uniform as a symbol of social control. This element of social control as described by Lurie (1981 p 18) and also in a medical setting by Pratt and Rafaeli (1997 p 865) helps to validate the finding of the asymmetric implementation of dress codes that was found in DE&S. See Chapter 4, section 4.3.8.

Because of the proximity of the military to civilians in DE&S, uniforms were an integral part of the DE&S landscape. It is, therefore, quite plausible that where there were differences in dress codes in DE&S then these differences might engender feelings that Military personnel were superior professionally to civil servants because they, the military, wore a uniform.

The breadth of prior literature on identity indicates that the conclusion that these types of symbols can reinforce in-groups and create out groups in DE&S, thus creating inter-group tensions, is a valid and logical one.

The identification of a concept of geographic, or territorial identity in DE&S chimes with the work of Abel (2010), King (2004), Seiler (1984), Vellinga (2007),

Wegerhoff (2008) on architecture and its effects on identity, and also the work of Kulik et al. (1987) on marking of team space and the creation of team identity through territory marking, and also Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010) on the use of corporate and organisational space to create identity and also how socio-technical factors, such as desk-booking could promote non-corporate behaviour. See also Weir et al. (2010) on the concept of the Diwan to mark a boundary between formal executive space and a more informal space.

At the corporate level, the marking of space through the use of architecture chimes with the methods and concepts that were identified by, for example, and also Abel (2010), King (2004), Seiler (1984), Vellinga (2007), Wegerhoff (2008).

There are similarities between the finding of legitimised and naturally occurring marking of territory in DE&S and the work of Kulik et al. (1987) and their findings on the positive aspects of marking of team space and the creation of team identity through territory marking.

At a personal and desk level the marking and protection of territorial identity was also observed by Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010) in a Dutch Telco where it also appears that the same factor that was identified in DE&S, that of the desk-booking system, produced very similar effects of competing for space. This makes that particular finding in DE&S highly valid, as does the observation by Weir et al. (2010), of the existence of a difference between types of executive space, with soft seats and protected and private areas.

The existence of these very similar practices in other organisations documented in literature shows that it is entirely plausible that the same factors would be observed and possibly amplified in a highly symbolic and stratified organisation such as DE&S.

In DE&S the finding that people could identify with different groups coincides with the work of Ellemers (2005), Foreman and Whetten (2002), and also Pate et al. (2010), Pratt and Foreman (2000), Riketta and Nienaber (2007), Van Dick et al.



(2004), Kirke (2007d). In DE&S it was found that group members were able to possess multiple, non-contradictory work-group identities, thus chiming with Ellemers (2005). These different identities also appeared to be linked not just to the organisational cultures of DE&S, in that staff appeared to identify negatively with DE&S as the bureaucracy, and positively with 'the front-line' and also with their role teams.

Staff thus appeared to show a high degree of social categorisation, and that categorisation appeared to be based on the perceived value of the group, i.e., DE&S = bad, front-line = good. This last factor, may also as Evans and Carson (2005) describe, be linked to the sizes of the groups that people were identifying with, as the groups that were highly identified with were predominantly smaller than the ones that were less strongly identified with.

The existence of these variations in identity in other places, and also the ability of group members to maintain multiple identities in organisations in prior literature supports the finding that the factors of identity manifestation that were identified in DE&S may have had an effect on the organisational culture of DE&S. It also adds to the plausibility of there being an ethos in DE&S that may differ from the bureaucratic culture of the Civil Service.

### **7.2.2 Language and Metaphor**

**Groups in DE&S possessed their own language. These dialects could act as a barrier between the group and the outsider, and they could also reinforce in groups. Metaphor was used as a series of vernacular labels to describe groups and their perceived and imagined behaviours.**

The concept of language and metaphor was manifest in DE&S through the following series of findings.

There were four elements within the concept of language in organisations that appeared to be relevant to this research.

The first was that of the characteristic of language to reinforce intergroup distinctiveness, as discussed by for example, Atun (2003), Bourhis and Giles (1977), Calman and Royston (1997), Evered (1983), Maass et al. (1989), Martin (2007), Piekkari et al. (2005), Rubini and Semin (1994), Tong et al. (1999), Whitman (2006) and also Wenger (1998).

The second was that of language as metaphor within organisations as discussed by Deetz (1985), Johnson (1980), Morgan and Lowry (1999), Morgan et al. (1997).

The third has two elements: first, gossip as an organisational or social sense-making mechanism, discussed by for example, Coates (1989), Bergmann (1993), Besnier (1989), Fine and Rosnow (1978), Fortunati (2008), Foster (2004), Foster and Rosnow (2006), Fuchs (1995), Jaeger (2004), Levin and Arluke (1987), Luna et al. (2013), March and Sevon (1984), Michelson and Mouly (2000), Michelson and Mouly (2004), Noon and Delbridge (1993), Paine (1967), Stirling (1956), Wert and Salovey (2004b), Wert and Salovey (2004a), Brown et al. (2004); and second, gossip as an evolutionary mechanism to promote social coherence as described by Dunbar (2007), Dunbar (1998), Dunbar (2003), Dunbar (2004), Dunbar et al. (1997), and also Mesoudi et al. (2006). Finally, the concept of language predicating emotional responses, or emotional intelligence within specific groups in organisations, is discussed by, for example, Down et al. (2006), Ferres and Connell (2004), Goleman et al. (2013), Boyatzis (2014), Boyatzis et al. (2014), and also McClelland and Boyatzis (1982).

The concept of language was observed to be one element of group distinctiveness in DE&S. This distinctiveness was exhibited through groups using jargon or different functional dialects. This use of jargon as a signifier of group difference was identified by Wenger (1998), and also by Atun (2003), Calman and Royston (1997), Evered (1983), Tong et al. (1999), and also Whitman (2006), who all appear to agree that language can help to create the in-group at the

expense of the out-group, thereby language became a tool of power within social categorisation.

The finding that the language that group members used appeared to be linked to group sizes chimes with the work of Dunbar and Zhou et al. (2005 p 440), Dunbar (1993a), where Dunbar uses the concept of the Tribe as a linguistically discrete unit ranged between 1500-2000 individuals. This boundary, for instance, coincides with the size of an Operating Centre in DE&S. Each Operating Centre has a significantly different function from another, and so it is entirely reasonable that there would be some form of linguistic difference between Operating Centres, but this difference appeared to be exacerbated because of the link between each Operating Centre and its customer, a particular Front Line Command. It follows that language was different at Operating Centre level, and that this difference had the potential to create boundaries and also tension between the groups.

The finding that language appeared to describe an emotion state that changed at particular points within the hierarchy of DE&S chimes with the work of Ferres and Connell (2004), and also Goleman et al. (2013). This different emotion state appeared in two broad areas of the DE&S hierarchy, where family and emotional language was used by below B grade staff, whereas language with a low emotional content was used by staff at B grade and above. This is described in sections 4.7.3 and 4.7.4 and leads to a conclusion that there may have been low levels of emotional intelligence within certain staff areas of DE&S.

The B Grade stakeholders used bureaucratic, functional language that privileged and de-emotionalised a functionally related relationship with their work, and their peers. This grade group were described as being 'like an emotional desert'. This lack of emotional intelligence is as described by Goleman et al. (2013) and it may have two causes, one of which is functional, in that group members at this level may have been given tasks to specifically learn the management language. They may have been socialised into that language and also to that emotion state. Boyatzis et al. (2014) indicates that there are two human brain systems that affect

decision making. These are the Task Positive Network (TPN) and the Default Mode Network (DMN), and that these are antagonistic to each other. This means that according to Boyatzis, that the TPN drives logical function thinking, and cuts out the emotional network and more social thinking that is predicated through the DMN. It may therefore be easy for B2 grade and above members of DE&S to become functional and task directed, and it may be more difficult for them to switch out of that mode and to become more emotionally intelligent.

This then makes the emotional desert and the change of language at the B2 grade point from pragmatic language to abstract bureaucratese all the more plausible.

This change also appeared to lead to a difference in relationship between the group member and the group. In the first place, where a B2 and above group member who entered a relationship with a group that was more functional than social, they entered what appeared to be a para-social relationship. Such a relationship was in the style of a social relationship, but the relationship was not truly social, rather it was functionally based. Secondly, if the group member was below B2 level, then the relationship with their peers may have been couched in terms of family or social language, but as the relationship was not a true family relationship, it can be framed as a para-familial relationship.

There is a second way of discussing the language difference that occurred at the B2 grade level. It may be that people who did not get through the A&DC, or who were not successful B2 grade stakeholders, were less able to access what Boyatzis calls the TPN, or who were able to balance their emotional needs and therefore remained emotionally intelligent. They may have been able to balance the two relationships and become emotionally intelligent on a more consistent basis.

This concept of a group member having a different relationship with groups at different levels of the DE&S hierarchy was called by this research, para-sociality, to describe a bureaucratic relationship with the organisation, rather than a

humanistic relationship with group members, which this research termed a para-familial relationship. Both of these types of relatedness were exhibited through the language that described the strength of identity by a group member with the group, and by the member privileging that group over another.

This again is plausible because of the concept of language predicating emotional responses, or emotional intelligence within specific groups in organisations (Down et al., 2006), Ferres and Connell (2004), Goleman et al. (2013), Boyatzis (2014), Boyatzis et al. (2014), and also McClelland and Boyatzis (1982).

These findings, and their existence in this specific literature indicate that the TPN/DMN contradiction provides a further evolutionary reason for that particular group behaving in that way and the existence of the metaphor of the *emotional desert*. It therefore appears that evolutionary anthropology and psychology may help to explain some behaviours that appear to be 'hard-wired' into people, and which have an effect on the organisational culture of DE&S.

Language also helped to provide formal and informal group coherence. The finding that there was a particular pattern of language that was observed in relation to socialisation and group coherence activities chimes with Dunbar (1998), Dunbar (2004), and also Mesoudi et al. (2006) in that they identified what they call social linguistic grooming as a group coherence mechanism.

The use of language as organisationally directed gossip chimes with, for example, Fuchs (1995), Michelson and Mouly (2000), Michelson and Mouly (2004), and also Noon and Delbridge (1993), who indicate that while primarily perceived as a negative trait, the concept of gossip in organisations can be valuable in maintaining the position of members in groups. It also helps in maintaining wider group coherence and can also help where group members are attempting to rationalise organisational events.

It is therefore plausible that the pattern of information interchange that this research calls functional linguistic grooming, and which is defined as gossip

linked with functional information that takes place in a work-based as opposed to a social context is an appropriate label through which group coherence is enabled in DE&S. Functional linguistic grooming is a logical and appropriate extension of Dunbar's concept of social linguistic grooming (Dunbar, 2004, Dunbar et al., 1997, Dunbar and Shultz, 2010) within the specific context of maintaining group coherence in organisations because it is functional language and action that promotes group coherence in a functional, rather than social context. In addition, the existence of a particular language form, in the finding that informal group coherence and socialisation activities appeared to be more meaningful to those who experienced them is also entirely plausible, because, as Mesoudi et al. (2006) indicate, humans are biased towards the receipt and understanding of informal information.

The finding that metaphors were used within the vernacular language of DE&S to describe groups and their perceived and actual behaviour is supported by the work of Deetz (1985), Johnson (1980), Morgan and Lowry (1999), and also Morgan et al. (1997). There were three particular metaphors that were used within DE&S, and that were of particular interest to this research, that of the family, team and tribe.

These appeared to be associated with two characteristics of groups in DE&S. The first being group sizes, in that the metaphor of the group as a family appeared to be applied to small groups, whereas the concept label of 'team' applied to groups that were larger than family sized groups, but that were smaller than Operating Centres or tribes. The use of these metaphors appears to link to the hierarchy of group sizes as proposed by Dunbar where a family, or support clique group, has 5 members (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 56 Table 1), Zhou et al. (2005 p 440)), a mega-band possesses 500 members and a tribe possesses 1500-2000 (Dunbar, 1993a p 6).

If this is correct, then the fact that Dunbar uses the same labels to categorize the concept of the family or the support clique may be no more than coincidence. But

this research tentatively suggests that it is plausible that the factor that links the three concepts is the fact that through time, humans have lived in group sizes that Dunbar proposes as a consistent hierarchy, see (Hill and Dunbar, 2003 p 56 Table 1), Zhou et al. (2005 p 440).

Therefore, as a result of this, when these group sizes arise in organisations such as DE&S, people may naturally use a metaphor to describe their lived reality, and that metaphor, unknown to them, may truthfully describe that reality. The second factor is that the labels of family and tribe appeared to be used in the vernacular to describe a series of behaviours that were predominantly negative, such as fighting for resources.

This feeling is consistent with the findings of, for example, Becher and Trowler (2001), Cooke (2008), Etter Sr (1998), Ferguson (1996), Campbell (2006), Deloria (1971), Neuhauser (1988), Price and Cybulski (2007), Wilby (1997), Hilder (2004), and also Cameron and Quinn (1999). On group labelling within organisations Cameron and Quinn also used the word tribe along with clan and fiefdom to describe what appear to be the same behaviours that were discovered in DE&S, but in other organisations (Cameron and Quinn, 1999). Hilder (2004) and separately, Price and Cybulski (2007) also use Maffesoli's concept of the neo-tribe (Maffesoli, 1998) as a conceptual label to describe negative group behaviours that they observed in technology organisations, which may be similar in function and form to DE&S as it may be called a technology organisation.

In addition to the factors of group size and language, the existence of the metaphor the tribe appeared to be legitimised in DE&S through the existence of the formally named tribal networks which were originally designed to preserve the identity of the single service military *tribes* in the joint civil service acquisition environment.

This research tentatively suggests that it is plausible that this legitimisation of the *tribe* as a label acted to reinforce the negative behaviours that were perceived to be enacted under the aegis of that label. This then may have given members of

these groups permission to create and maintain otherness and cultural boundaries between the military and civilian staff.

In DE&S, the metaphor of the tribe and of the family helped to maintain group distinctiveness which was also observed through identity, language, and symbols as group or tribal attributes.

To further test the validity of these findings, the existence of these factors were also compared to the characteristics of archaic and neo-tribes as described for example by Bennett (1999), Boas and Farrand (1898), Cooke (2008), Ferguson (1996), Fox (2005), Fried (1975), Godin (2008), Isaacs (1975), Maffesoli (1998), Morris (1981), Pennings and Pascoe (2012), Rink (1891), Zhou et al. (2005), Baldus (2003), Campbell (2006), Cova and Cova (2002), Dawod (2001), Deloria (1971), Emelyanov-Lukyanchikov (2004), Goulding and Shankar (2011), Gulati (2007), Ramakrishna (1994), Sowell (1997), Taute and Sierra (2014), Walzer (1992)

These factors are presented in Table 7-2 which builds on the work of Price and Cybulski (2007), Hilder (2004) and also Britan (1980) and others to provide an indication of the characteristics of neo- and archaic tribes.



Attribute	Archaic Tribe	Neo Tribe	DE&S para tribe
Leader	Common leader Price and Cybulski (2007p 797)	Common leader (Godin, 2008, Hilder, 2004)	Chief Executive, Team Leader/Director.
Identity	Common shared identity (Rink, 1891, Boas and Farrand, 1898)	Common shared identities (Fried, 1975, Isaacs, 1975)	Common organisational identity. Fractured sub-group identities that become tribal affiliations.
Symbols	Common symbols and understanding of them, can be interpreted for the group (Boas and Farrand, 1898, Rink, 1891)	Common symbols presented as brands, or genres (Bennett, 1999, Balmer, 2008a, Taute and Sierra, 2014, Cova and Cova, 2002, Dionísio et al., 2008, Moutinho et al., 2007).	Hierarchy of symbols that range from Corporate to sub-team, legitimised and non-legitimised symbols. Meaning may be given as positive or subversive and may be contextually congruent or contested.
Geographic distinctiveness	Geographically bound Price and Cybulski (2007p 797)	May be geographically bound, but also intermediated by technology and therefore distributed.	Geographically bound by organisational requirements. Territory legitimised, marked, and protected with a hierarchy of symbols that indicate proximity to centres of power and/or differing functional contexts/ sub groups.
Language distinctiveness	Common language Dunbar (1993a) Price and Cybulski (2007p 797)	Common language that may be exclusive in nature	Common language composed of sub-set of organisational dialects that the group(s) interact with, or are culturally aligned to.
Group size	Family groups range at 12-15, Clans 35, and tribes range from mega-bands at 500 members to tribes between 1500-2000 (Hill and Dunbar, 2003, Zhou et al., 2005)	Insufficient evidence to describe meaningful group sizes of Neo-tribes	Para-family groups range from 5- 15 members, para-tribes range from 500-2000 members of a pillar, business unit or an Operating Centre. Boundaries are distinguished by language, symbolic and geographic markers.

Attribute	Archaic Tribe	Neo Tribe	DE&S para tribe
Membership	Exclusive, only able to exercise membership of one group at any one time (Boas and Farrand, 1898, Rink, 1891)	May be exclusive, only able to exercise membership of one group at any one time as in the case of Mods/Rockers/Street gangs. May also be multiple and nested, e.g., musical/literary genres. (Cova and Cova, 2002, Etter Sr, 1998)	May be exclusive, but more likely to be mediated by context and nested, with multiple group memberships and identities being accessible to the group member depending on context and need, i.e., the socio-technical or the socio-cultural.
Shared Social Structure	Family, Clan and tribal loyalty. (Wallerstein, 1960, McFate, 2005, Gillett, 1973)	Social structure of that group at that time (Ferguson, 1996, Gibbs, 1994, Godin, 2008, Maffesoli, 1998, Watters, 2003), Price and Cybulski (2007p 797)	Corporate structure that exists as a primarily socio-technical wrapper around multiple nested and potentially contradictory socio-cultural sub-cultures.
Shared heritage with Remembrancers	Common heritage, shamanic and bardic remembrancing (Boas and Farrand, 1898, Rink, 1891)	Common memories, nostalgia events/fanzines/tribute bands (Bennett, 1999)	Corporate memory, records and archives. Greybeards access socio-technical heritage, referential identities access socio-cultural heritage.
Group Coherence	Events when group members convene at special places to carry out particular rituals/festivals	Events when group members convene at special places to carry out particular rituals/festivals	Team-building events, team briefings which may have a formal para-ritualised structure. E.g., Friday breakfasts, Christmas parties, retirement events.

**Table 7-2 Characteristics of Archaic, Neo-Tribes and teams in DE&S**

Sources: After Price and Cybulski (2007), Compiled by Derek Shaw 2015

Table 7-2 indicates that the attributes of identity, language, symbols, and place which exist in archaic, and neo-tribes, and also exist in groups in DE&S which are the subject of this research. This thesis hesitates to call them tribes, but suggests that these groups can be called para-tribes, because they appear to be, and act as though they are tribes.

The existence of those characteristics in such a consistent manner in the literature makes it entirely plausible that the finding that DE&S was called a *tribal organisation* in the vernacular, and, in more academic language a para-tribal organisation, is valid.

**7.2.3 Team Size**

**The consistent sizes of teams and groups within the hierarchy of DE&S affected the Organisational Culture of DE&S.**

Chapter 2 identified two approaches to team and group size in organisations. The first is functional and task based design, see for example, Amason and Sapienza (1997), Cohen and Bailey (1997), Curral et al. (2001), Fried (1991), Hackman (1987), Haleblian and Finkelstein (1993), Hoegl (2005), (2004), Ilgen et al. (2005), Katzenbach and Smith (1992), Neuman et al. (1999), and also Pendharkar and Rodger (2009). The second is an evolutionary approach, see for example, Allen (2004), Dunbar et al. (1995), Pulliam and Caraco (1984), Zhou et al. (2005), and also Nicholson (2000).

Table 7-3 shows the series of organisational team sizes from literature and also DE&S and shows their proximity to evolutionary stable group sizes as proposed by Dunbar

Table 7-3 is laid out thus:

Column 1 – Author or source of data.

Column 2 – Type of Team if known

Column 3 – Range of team sizes as number of members

Column 4 – Average number of team or group members

Column 5 – Proximity to Dunbar group size

Column 6 – Dunbar Hierarchy point

Author	Team Type	Size Range, Number of Members	Average Number of Members	Proximity to Dunbar group sizes $\pm$	Dunbar Boundary that is closest to data
Hoegl (2005)	Software development	High performing 3-6 Low performing 7-9	4.4 7.8	Within $\pm 2$ Within -2, +4	Group size of 5 members
(Campion et al., 1996)	Work teams	6-30	15	Within $\pm 3$ (Average)	Group size of 5 members
(Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1993)	Management	None given	3.39 (S.d 1.46)	Within $\pm 2$	Group size of 5 members
(Kirkman and Rosen, 1999)	Work teams	11.12-13.83 <sup>92</sup> 11.4-15.32 <sup>93</sup>	13	Within $\pm 3$	Group size of 15 members
(Curral et al., 2001)	Work	2-18	5	Within $\pm 3$	Group size of 15 members
DE&S Operating Centres B&D	Role Teams	5-9	5	Within $\pm 4$	Group size of 5 members

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<sup>92</sup> Team member data

<sup>93</sup> Team leader data

Author	Team Type	Size Range, of Number Members	Average Number of Members	Proximity to Dunbar group sizes $\pm$	Dunbar Boundary that is closest to data
DE&S Operating Centre E	Role teams	5-16	N/A	Within $\pm 2$ .	Group size of 5 and 15 members
Operating Centre D Pillar B Designed Group size 178 <sup>94</sup> . Actual group size 139	1* Pillar	139-178	N/A	-15 and + 28 at designed size, stable size -11 at Dunbar maximum cognitive group size	Proximity to Dunbar group sizes 135 $\pm$ 15 or 150 $\pm$ 30
Operating Centre E Designed Group size 117 <sup>95</sup> . Actual group size 111	1* Pillar	111-117	N/A	Designed size -33 at Dunbar maximum cognitive group size,	Proximity to Dunbar group sizes 135 $\pm$ 15 or 150 $\pm$ 30
DE&S	Top Teams	5-7	6	$\pm 2$	Group sizes of 5 members
DE&S	Operating Centres	500-2500	N/A	500-2500	Megaband and or tribe of 500 to 2000 members

**Table 7-3 Team Size Comparison Between Literature, DE&S and Dunbar**

Source: Derek Shaw

Table 7-3 shows the proximity of group sizes that were identified in DE&S to a sample of those that were found in literature, Campion et al. (1996), Amason and Sapienza (1997), Bradner et al. (2005), Curral et al. (2001), see for example Fried (1991), Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993), and also Pendharkar and Rodger

<sup>94</sup> Total team size 178 including 41 vacancies and Top Team, stable group size 137.

<sup>95</sup> Total team size 117 including 6 vacancies and Top Team, stable group size 111.

(2009), (2006), Hoegl (2005). These group sizes were also close to the hierarchy of group sizes that Hill and Dunbar (2003), and also in Zhou et al. (2005). In this author's opinion this proximity indicates that there may be evolutionary factors at play within the group sizes that exist in organisations.

The team sizes that appear regularly across DE&S also appear to be consistent with those found in the literature, indicating a positive degree of validity of the findings in DE&S. Team and group sizes in DE&S were presented in section 4.6.

In looking for other reasons to explain the consistency within team sizes and other groups in DE&S the search leads to evolutionary anthropology and psychology. This is where the work of Hill and Dunbar (2003 p 63) suggests that, as a result of evolution, groups and human networks scale consistently at a factor of between 3 and 4, and are layered, hierarchical and geometrically sized 2, 3, 5, 15, 45-50, up to maximum cognitive boundary of 150.

Dunbar shows that this hierarchy of group sizes is consistent across a wide range of groups, for example, archaic groups, hunter gatherer groups, religious communities, and also armies (2003 Figure 1), Hill et al. (2008). Groups sized between 500 members and up to 2500 members become in Dunbar's terms, 'mega-bands' and tribes Hill and Dunbar (2003 p 67) and at this size possess the attribute of linguistic distinctiveness.

In terms of evolutionary group size, Dunbar tested his group size theory against groups in armies from ancient Persian armies to the present (Dunbar, 2003). The group sizes that were found within this research of mixed military and civilian groups were congruent with Dunbar's findings on group sizes in other military organisations (2003 Figure 1), Hill et al. (2008).

The proximity of the military to both DE&S and also to Dunbar's work is of interest to this research because of the closeness with which group sizes in both the military and DE&S match each other and also Dunbar's group size criteria.

This research has then extended the explanation of Dunbar's work to show that there appears to be an underlying bias towards these size groups, as teams and larger groups in organisations through the critical and comparative literature review and field data, the results of which are presented in Table 7-3.

In addition, the use of Dunbar's scaling factor of between 3 and 4 as a boundary and also to scale up the group sizes, to provide  $5\pm2$ ,  $15\pm3$ ,  $45\pm9$  and  $135\pm15$  or  $150\pm30$  has provided a consistent frame within which group sizes in DE&S can be viewed. This was presented in 4.6. These groups in DE&S fall within a consistent margin either side of Dunbar's internal group size boundaries. The consistency of group sizes again may be attributed to the result of evolutionary factors, rather than intellectual organisational design, and organisational design in DE&S may therefore be cognitively biased. This research has made Dunbar's work more pragmatic and applicable to organisational design theory by showing the consistency of Dunbar's scaling criteria in one organisation, which might be used to bound group size patterns within other organisations.

Therefore, there appears to be a very close match between formal team and group sizes as well as social group size in DE&S, prior literature on organisations and Dunbar's group sizes and scaling factors. Also, that the label of *team* is a concept label for a group with a common purpose, that ranges in size from 5 to 160 members, but can be used as a metaphor for groups with more than 160 members who have the same common purpose.

This research suggests that this closeness is not coincidental, but arises as a result of evolutionary factors, because as shown in Table 7-3. Dunbar's group sizes are seen clearly in organisations in prior literature. It may therefore be the case that the group sizes that were observed in those other organisations are not due to function and task based organisational design, but are evolutionarily predicated.

## **7.2.4 Induction and Socialisation.**

### **Induction and socialisation in DE&S was manifest throughout DE&S**

Testing of the findings on induction and socialisation takes the following form: induction and socialisation into DE&S at the point of its creation will be discussed. This will be followed by induction and socialisation of members into DE&S, especially cohorts and graduates; and then induction and socialisation of members from group to group. This in turn is followed by induction and socialisation of military personnel into DE&S. The final section tests the findings on team-building.

The finding that induction into DE&S on its creation was inconsistent, and also that it engendered high levels of cynicism that employees felt towards DE&S at that time, chimes with the work of Wanous et al. (2004) and others both in regard to induction but also to organisational change, see for example Andersson (1996), Brown and Cregan (2008), Dean et al. (1998), Stanley et al. (2005).

It is then quite realistic that, as a result of the levels of cynicism that this research discovered, it was possible to identify both DLO and DPA behaviours and organisational cultures in DE&S, because staff had not been inducted into the required DE&S behaviours. As a result it appeared that there was no single DE&S.

This secondary effect chimes with the work of Kirke who discusses cultural drag in Defence Acquisition (Kirke, 2010 p 98 ). This finding also makes it quite plausible that the reasons that the organisational cultural changes that were intended for DE&S, did not happen as they should have, because staff were not fully inducted or socialised into the new concept of DE&S. They therefore could exhibit their 'old' behaviours instead of 'new' ones.

The finding that induction of graduates was inconsistent chimes partially with the work of Garavan and Morley (1997), and also Scholarios et al. (2003), who indicate that graduate entry schemes are *generally effective*. This was



discovered in DE&S: the MOD level elements of induction were well organised but the DE&S elements were not. This then adds to the plausibility that induction in DE&S was inconsistent. This inconstancy was also found in the inductions that new group members received when they moved from group to group.

There was also a temporal boundary that existed between the completion of formal induction, and the predominance of informal integration. No references in literature to this type of boundary could be found. When testing was carried out in other organisations, three of the organisations, two similar to DE&S, being parts of the Civil Service, and one an industrial organisation, indicated that there was a similar boundary, but that the boundary occurred at a different time in each organisation. DE&S appears to be idiosyncratic in respect of this timing and how it was viewed by the organisation and by staff.

The finding that the induction of military personnel into DE&S was different from the induction that civil servants received, and that they also received a military specific arrivals process, the JSAU (DE&S, 2010a) led to several outcomes: the expectations that military personnel held with regards to DE&S may not have been met, thus chiming with, amongst others, Chen and Klimoski (2003), Garavan and Morley (1997), Korte and Sylvester (1982), Wanous et al. (1992), and also Dean (1984), who also discuss the effects that expectations' mis-match can have on new entrants to organisations.

This then add to the credibility that some of the behaviours that were observed in military staff, such as cultural ineptness, were valid within the context of this research. The existence of the military specific arrivals process created a boundary between civil servants and the military that supported the feeling that they, the military, were somehow different, and more valuable, thus increasing the plausibility that socialisation in this instance reinforced social categorisation.

Team building in DE&S was found to consist of the same formal, socio-technical and the informal, socio-cultural types as induction and socialisation.

The identification of these two types of team-building chimes with the work of Anthony and Janet (2002), and also Salas et al. (1999). It is therefore entirely plausible to label these two types, socio-technical and socio-cultural team-building, because of the differing context, content and outcomes that were required of each type.

The finding that formal team-building appeared to be divisive chimes with the work of Sherif (1956) and makes it plausible that the finding in which formal, competitive team-building was seen to create in-groups and could be divisive was also valid.

The finding that social-cultural integrative practice was better than formal socio-technical practice at building teams was supported by internal responses from DE&S and other staffs. This chimes with the work of Mesoudi et al. (2006), who stated that informal information exchange, which was associated with social rather than functional practice is biased by people over the exchange of formal information. This finding and its validation indicates that staff were correct in their view that informal socialisation practice was more meaningful and useful to them than was formal induction. This level of confirmation again increases the validity and plausibility of the finding that informal socialisation and team-building were more effective at building collaborative teams in DE&S than formal team-building was.

Throughout DE&S induction and socialisation were inconsistently practised and experienced, and informal socialisation appeared to be more meaningful to those that experienced it. Several underlying findings were discovered. These findings will now be presented and tested against appropriate literature, if any exists.

The finding that informal socialisation in DE&S was neither purely technical nor purely social appears to chime with the work of Feldman (1976), and his description of contingent socialisation, where socialisation into a group occurs where and when it is needed and is therefore contextually appropriate. It also chimes with Van Maanen (1978), Van Maanen and Schein (1979), Nicolini et al.

(2003) Rohde and Sprogøe (2007), and also Sprogøe and Rohde (2007) who all take a more integrated view of socialisation.

The finding that formal team-building had a series of outcomes that were specified by 'management', and that informal socialisation did not chime with the findings of Klein (2000), Semmer and Schallberger (1996). The difference in outcomes between the two types was striking.

Formal team-building required functional outcomes and therefore might be thought of as being predominantly socio-technical in nature, whereas the outcomes of informal socialisation were more social, such as getting to know people better, and therefore apparently more socio-cultural in nature. This research has found no literature that directly describes these findings, but there are similarities to be found in the work of Van Maanen (1978), Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and also Feldman (1976) who indicate that there is a spectrum of needs between managers and staff in socialisation.

This appears to add to the feeling that this finding is valid, and also when expressed in this way is singularly applicable to DE&S. It is also reasonable to see that there is a link between this finding and the finding of the para-social and para-familial relationship that existed through the expression of language and of what Boyatzis (2014), Boyatzis et al. (2014), and McClelland and Boyatzis (1982) have indicated is a function of neural processing.

This once again provides validation of the vernacular view that the behaviours noted within this group were 'hard-wired' into people and were therefore evolutionary in nature.

The finding that DE&S did not fund or legitimise team-building in the period after the merger, or any similar practice could not be found reflected in literature.

There was also no literature that directly linked team-building with group sizes, but group sizes in DE&S appeared to match a series of bounded group sizes chimes both with the management literature on functional team sizes, for

example, Bergmann (1993), Foster and Rosnow (2006), Fuchs (1995), Haviland (1977), Jaeger (2004), Luna et al. (2013), March and Sevón (1984), Mesoudi et al. (2006), Michelson and Mouly (2000), Michelson and Mouly (2004), Noon and Delbridge (1993), and also Wert and Salovey (2004b).

The co-existence of these group sizes in both management literature, as described by for example Bradner et al. (2005), (Fried, 1991, Halebian and Finkelstein, 1993, Hoegl, 2005, Cohen and Bailey, 1997), and the coherence activities that accompany them, indicate that it is realistic to make a further link to evolutionary factors that influence the organisational culture of DE&S through the combination of the interaction of gossip, group sizes and group coherence activities.

The finding that team-building in DE&S was explicitly used to create a sense of identity chimes with the work of Anthony and Janet (2002), Salas et al. (1999). It also chimes with the work of Brown Brown (1999), Rupert et al. (2007) Ellemers (2005), Galen (2009), Hennessy and West (1999), Hogg (2003), Paulsen (2003), Tajfel and Turner (1986), in that all groups possess an identity and that they will try to reinforce that identity in relation to themselves and to other groups. This finding makes it even more plausible that the conclusion that a) DE&S accidentally reinforced innate group behaviour, and b) that informal team-building was more meaningful than formal team-building activity, and that both the finding and the conclusion are valid.

The finding that, as with induction and socialisation, formal and informal team-building activity could be conjoined, points to what Feldman (1976) calls contingent socialisation, and what this research prefers to call contextually appropriate socialisation activity. This finding appears to lend weight to the view that the socio-technical and the socio-cultural were inextricably linked in DE&S, through the socio, the people.

### **7.2.5 Organisation Culture, Ethos and Cultural Drag in DE&S**

**There was no organisational culture in DE&S, but there was an organisational ethos. Also Cultural drag existed that affected the speed of organisational change.**

The discovery that there was no single organisational culture in DE&S chimes with the work of Van Knippenberg and Van Leeuwen (2001 p 249) who indicate that multiple organisational cultures after a merger may be beneficial to the merged organisation. This makes it entirely plausible that the existence of the multiple organisational cultures in DE&S at that time, although appearing to be an accident, had a more positive effect than group members may have realised.

A conceptual model of those multiple organisational cultures was developed Figure 6-1. The usefulness of this model was validated by responses from DE&S staff, who recognized the language that was used to describe the groups and also the behaviours that were attributed to the groups. Therefore, it is entirely plausible, because of the validation with literature and also within DE&S staff, that the finding of the multi-organisational cultural nature of DE&S is both valid and furthermore confirms the fact that there was no single DE&S organisational culture.

The finding that what this research refers to as cultural drag in DE&S, which occurred after the merger of the DPA and the DLO, chimes with the work of Kirke (2010 p 98), and also (Ogburn, 1964). This research further suggests that what Kirke calls cultural drag is socio-cultural drag. This research developed Kirke's concept of cultural drag and has identified a further facet of cultural drag, that of socio-technical drag. This appears where organisational process and practice do not change fast enough, causing the drag that occurs when organisational changes do not occur as expected, as the people, the socio, use old processes, because they have to, not because they want to. Hofstede also indicates that an

organisation's history constrains future organisational behaviour (Hofstede, 1980 p 27).

Some further reasons for the existence of cultural drag may be linked to a lack of induction and preparedness for the merger, which chimes with the work of Smith (2005). This factor of cultural drag may also be a factor that affects the success in organisational change programmes. This chimes with the work of Bovey and Hede (2001), externally to MOD, and with the findings of Barton (2011), who remarked on the lack of success of organisational change programmes in MOD.

The finding that the ethos of 'front-line-first' appeared to be the single unifying factor in DE&S appeared to be supported by Bem, who said that "*values are ends, not means, and their desirability is either non-consciously taken for granted (a zero order belief) or seen as a direct derivation from experience or from some external authority (a first order belief)*" Bem (1970 p 16). This view also chimes with Hofstede who says that culture is a system of collectively held values (1980 p 24). Hofstede also says that culture can be affected by non-members (1980 p 30). The organisational cultures in DE&S, and the values that support those cultures would logically be influenced by for example, Front Line Command Cultures and the Political culture of the United Kingdom, especially as members of those groups worked in DE&S.

It is therefore quite credible and entirely valid that the ethos of front-line-first is the single consistent factor within the multiple organisational and professional cultures and it is this that unites DE&S, and which is confused as 'the culture of DE&S' but it is in reality, a value that is personally and professionally held within DE&S.

### **7.2.6 Summary**

Section 7.2 has shown that either the finding, or the effect of each of the findings can be validated in prior literature. This broad and intense validation gives credence to the academic validity of both the findings and also of the conclusions that are drawn from those findings.

## **7.3 Testing the Findings in DE&S and Other Organisations**

### **7.3.1 Introduction**

Section 7.3 presents the results of the Internal and external testing of the research findings. It is structured as follows: Table 7-4 presents a table of personnel who tested the findings and indicates their industry affiliation and response, then follows the results of internal testing within DE&S, lastly the results of the testing that was carried out externally to DE&S are presented.

### **7.3.2 Testing the Findings**

#### **7.3.2.1 Internal Testing**

As discussed in Chapter 3 the research findings were tested in DE&S and also in comparable organisations. These were a UK Government Trading Agency, a major UK Defence contracting organisation and also a regiment of the British Army. Those findings were: identity, and identification with groups and the axes of identification, group sizes as found in formal and informal groups, and the concept of the lack of organisational culture, and also the directional model of project effort versus bureaucratic policy.

When tested internally with informants, the data met Sanger's criteria whereby:

*“Analyses of the relationship between events and people achieve greater validity if participants who have been observed in the research, recognize*

*themselves, their motives, their actions and their rationale in the researcher's recordings and reconstructions"* (Sanger, 1996 p 40).

Table 7-4 Testing provides the details of the testing and also an indication of the responses. The results were recognized by test subjects as being truthful to DE&S, both as observed by DE&S employees, and also by those respondents who looked into DE&S from other partner organisations. This therefore gave the researcher greater confidence that the results were both valid and reliable.



Grade	No. Respondents	Method	Response notes
SCS/ Military Star Grades	5	PowerPoint™ Presentation of results and discussion	Recognised main themes, added examples in from their experience of group behaviours affecting outputs. One person challenged the results and then admitted that they recognized all the themes and often acted in that way. (Shaw, 2010-2012)
Broader Banded B	6	PowerPoint™ Presentation of results and/or discussion	Generally recognized themes, but might disagree that they, or their teams, were tribal, or acted in that way, But they admitted that they recognized the behaviour in other teams. (Shaw, 2011-2014)
Contractor	1	Discussion of results	Recognised themes in DE&S and home company. (Shaw, 2014d)
Broader Banded C	5	Discussion of results	Recognised themes, and who was to blame for them. Often adding in that these stopped them from getting on with the job. (Shaw, 2011-2014)
External	4	PowerPoint™ Presentation of results and discussion	Recognised themes in DE&S and home company. (Shaw, 2014h)
Commercial workshop	30	PowerPoint™ Presentation of results and discussion	Recognised themes, added in about group size becoming unmanageable above 120. Wanted to improve induction to get a better, less fractious team. (Shaw, 2012d).
External Military	1	Two discussions of the results and comparison to their experience in the British Army	Recognised the findings, and added in specific examples within their experience in the British Army.

**Table 7-4 Testing Personnel and Industry Affiliation**

A sample of five civilian SCS and military equivalent grade informants were approached formally by the researcher and a meeting was arranged with each informant that was intended to last at least one hour to enable a detailed discussion of the concepts.

The meeting consisted of the researcher giving each informant a presentation of the key findings. This initiated a detailed discussion of each finding with the respondent. This method changed when presenting findings to B grade civil servants and their military equivalents, where with some informants who were familiar with the research, a discussion was held that was more informal than using a presentation to describe the findings.

Validation of key findings with contractors and C grade and below staff was completed through a series of face to face discussions with individuals, often as informal coffee meetings.

Validation of the key findings with the external organisations was achieved by formally contacting the respondents at the organisation, when a meeting was arranged to discuss the findings. The meeting consisted of the researcher giving the informant a presentation of the key and contentious findings, which included a detailed discussion of each finding with the respondents.

Testing of the findings started in DE&S in January 2011 on completion of the interviews, when the researcher completed an initial themes briefing to an SCS 2\*. The themes that were identified at this early stage were that of the extent of the tribe metaphor and the existence of the apparent identity and cultural split in DE&S.

The researcher later took this finding to one of their trusted informants to obtain a greater degree of face validity, if appropriate. As a result of this discussion, a preliminary version of the model at figure 6.1 was developed.

Further confirmation of the validity of the full findings by SCS and star grade staff was provided in 2012 by the 1\* lead within Operating Centre A:

*‘Having moved swiftly from denial to acceptance regarding the 1\* behaviours, I really enjoyed reading your thought provoking notes’* (Shaw, 2011a).

A subsequent meeting with a 2\* civil servant (Shaw, 2012a) separately validated the results of the protection and competition for resources between groups and also the change of language from direct language to more bureaucratic language at B grade level and above.

The change of language was further confirmed in a meeting with an assessor of the Assessment and Development Centre (A&DC). They indicated that the assessors had voiced concerns over the levels of what Goleman et al. (2013) call emotional intelligence that they as assessors had observed in candidates at the A&DC (Shaw, 2014o). This informant was also able to confirm that the behaviours that were characterised as a lack of emotional intelligence appeared to be hard-wired into some people, and that as Boyatzis et al. (2014) suggest, some people, who were highly emotionally intelligent appeared to be able to balance both states, in DE&S as 1\* and 2\* levels.

### 7.3.2.2 Group Testing

Wider testing of the findings in DE&S was gained through participation in a commercial function workshop where the Team Leader had requested a presentation of the research findings, concentrating on the findings on induction and socialisation. This agenda was suggested because it was recognised within this group, as the group was growing quickly, and had reached 35 members, that a more effective approach to induction members into the group was needed at this time.

This workshop provided the following response: *'I worked in a UOR [Urgent Operational Requirements] IPT (Integrated Project Team), it was about 120 people, when it got over that number, it kind of broke up and became unmanageable'* (Shaw, 2012i).

This response, which was given before the researcher had presented any information on the group sizes that had been found in DE&S, adds to the validation of the findings in that they were recognised and added to by members of DE&S. It also increases the plausibility of the conclusions and further fulfils Sanger's validity criteria quoted above (Sanger, 1996 p 40).

### 7.3.3 External Testing

The findings were also tested outside DE&S where their validity was also supported through the following comments such as that following, which was received when the researcher was presenting the research results at an internal MOD and academic conference when the respondent indicated what he saw as the 'rightness' of the conclusions:

*'I can relate to all of what you said, I don't know all the language, but I can see it in evidence all around me. People do go and socialise over a coffee and my team, I had a small team within a team, ...I had a fifteen man team, right sort of figure for Dunbar, and we were very focussed, we had a very clear set of support contracts, it was the best experience in my time in the*

*Army apart from commanding a squadron of tanks which is 100 people and again these are all within the group sizes that you are saying'* (Shaw, 2013m).

When tested in a defence contractor and an external agency, the findings produced strikingly similar results. In the defence contractor, the hierarchy of the organisation, because it was a project team based organisation was recognised as being similar to that identified in DE&S, with team sizes provided by testing informants as anecdotally falling within those same size boundaries, although larger corporate groups appeared to fall outside those boundaries.<sup>96</sup>

The finding that there was a language divide between the corporate organisation and the project teams was recognised in both of the organisations. In the defence contractor this difference was anecdotally ascribed to the way that the organisation had developed in an organic way as it had taken over and merged with other defence contractors, and the fact that not all of these organisations had been fully integrated into the parent company. This chimed with the effect of the lack of integration of the DPA and the DLO that occurred at the creation of DE&S.

Thus it appears that within both the defence contractor and the external agency all of the concepts and the findings were recognised, some in such great detail, such as induction, and also the use of a desk booking system, which was coincidentally at that time being implemented in the external agency. This indicates that the legitimacy of the research findings was greatly increased and also led to the identification of new potential research areas.

The findings, when tested in a regiment of the British Army, (Shaw, 2014c) were both recognised as being seen in the parts of the Civil Service that this informant had experienced, but also in the British Army. This informant also validated the finding of a hierarchy of group sizes in DE&S by relating that hierarchy of group sizes to the hierarchy of group sizes that were in their regiment, and also to the

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<sup>96</sup> See section 8.1.3 for suggestions for further research.

wider Army. That hierarchy of group sizes was also highly consistent with the findings of Dunbar (Dunbar, 1993a, Zhou et al., 2005).

They also recognised the concept of tribalism, as defined in Table 7-2 and also section 2.7. They were able to relate that to their experience of what they called '*cap-badge tribalism*', where different regiments would work to out-manoeuvre another, in order to look better, get better jobs, not to do 'worse jobs' or at an individual level, would fight each other, either symbolically at inter-regiment sports or boxing matches, or physically, after individuals had been drinking. The finding that there was a change in behaviour at what corresponded to the B2 level in the Civil Service, which was equivalent to the Lt Col., level in the Army was also validated, as this was the level at which a person became more corporate in the Civil Service, or regimentally or army focussed, rather than company or platoon focussed. The validation from all of these informants and their different organisations increases the validity of the findings and also the plausibility of the conclusions that have been drawn from the findings.

#### **7.3.4 Conclusion**

The results of the research have been systematically validated through reference to prior literature, by referral back to DE&S and to external organisations. This research is therefore able to confidently suggest that the conclusion that identity, linguistic frameworks, evolutionarily predicated group sizes and also the ways that induction and socialisation were carried out worked together as system of factors to affect the organisational culture of DE&S.

## **8 Conclusions And Recommendations**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Chapter 8 presents some reasons that this research is unique, conclusions that can be drawn from the findings, a putative future research agenda and finally some implications of this research for other organisations. Chapter 8 concludes with a series of implications and recommendations for DE&S and other organisations that arise from this study.

#### **8.1.1 Presenting the Reasons Why This Study is Unique**

This research is considered to be unique because no research of this nature, or at this level, has been carried out in DE&S, the DPA and the DLO. Also, no studies have investigated the organisational culture of DE&S, apart from Kirke's small pilot study (2007a) which contributed to his paper on the importance of understanding the importance of understanding organisational culture in the context of defence acquisition (2010). In addition, this research has been carried out in an environment where it is difficult for outside academics to gain access to study, and none have at this level. As a result the researcher was in a privileged position as an employee and trusted insider to the organisation and able to observe and gather data without, for most of the time being questioned as to why they were doing the research. This research is therefore unique when considered on those factors alone.

A further factor in the uniqueness of this research is that DE&S only existed in the form that was investigated from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, when it underwent an organisational change to become a Bespoke Government Trading Entity (BTE). Therefore, the research cannot be directly repeated as the underlying organisational structures that were the object of the initial research are no longer in place, even though the people, processes and organisational outputs remains generally the same.

In academic terms, this research is further considered to be unique because of the theoretical framework that combined a broad social sciences approach with evolutionary anthropology and psychology. These have been used to investigate and understand factors that affected the organisational culture of DE&S. This specific, multi-factorial framework has not been used before within any organisation, let alone part of the UK government, such as DE&S.

### **8.1.2 Conclusions**

Chapter 7 presented and tested the findings of this research, Section 8.1.2 now takes those findings and draws some conclusions from them, the foremost conclusion being:

**There was no single Organisational Culture in DE&S but there was a single ethos that brought the multiple Organisational cultures together, that ethos was 'front-line-first'.**

There were multiple factors within DE&S that allowed this multiplicity of organisational cultures to exist.

Identity, its legitimisation and management was a significant factor in the creation of group distinctiveness in DE&S. It was legitimised by DE&S through the use of, for example, lanyards and uniforms, territory marking and also asymmetrical implementation of dress codes between military personnel and civil servants. This difference in dress codes often led to tension between military personnel and civilians, with military personnel indicating that civilians were somehow not as professional as the military.

In terms of affiliation with different groups, group members were able to identify with more than one group at a time but group members predominantly identified not with DE&S but with *the lads and lasses on the frontline*. This was manifest in different ways depending on where a person was in the DE&S hierarchy, for example, staff at below administrative grade levels and military rank equivalents,



were more likely to identify strongly with their Role Team and the frontline. Management grade staff were more ambivalent in their strength of identification with DE&S, tending to, but not exclusively, identify more strongly with their role team and the *Front line*, but almost being the squeezed middle. Leadership and senior staff grades group members and were more likely to be ambivalent about their identification with both role front line, role teams and DE&S.

Established Senior Civil Service and Star grade military staff were seen to identify equally strongly with the Role Team, *Front Line* and DE&S. But *identification with*, differed from *commitment to*, as all staff were committed to supporting *the lads and lasses on the front line*, thus showing a paradox which might be explained through the use of ethos as one facet of culture, as opposed to it being the culture itself.

DE&S was a project and team based organisation. Formal teams and groups in DE&S were consistently sized at  $5 \pm 2$ ,  $15 \pm 3$ ,  $45 \pm 9$ ,  $135 \pm 15$ ,  $150 \pm 30$ , and 500 to above 2500. This pattern significantly matched the evolutionary stable group size criteria proposed by Dunbar (Zhou et al., 2005, Hill and Dunbar, 2003), and also those of Bernard and Kilworth (Bernard et al., 1987, McCarty et al., 2001).

The existence of this group size factor appears to indicate that organisational design of group sizes in DE&S was informed by cognitive bias, rather than by intellectual insight, because these group sizes have been shown to be evolutionarily comfortable to manage within the human brain (Hill and Dunbar, 2003, Zhou et al., 2005). The ability to manage groups at those size maxima was shown through the fact that when these group sizes were breached, the groups in DE&S became less manageable, less effective, and fractured to smaller group sizes.

A second conclusion is that the congruence of the group sizes with evolutionary stable group sizes provides legitimacy for groups in DE&S to be visible as clans and tribes by virtue of their size.

The combination of legitimised social categorisation, identification with groups and the sizes of the groups allowed group members to self-identify as *tribes*. This research describes these groups as *para-tribes*, and the groups behaving in a *tribal manner*.

These tribal behaviours of competition and protection of resources appeared to be caused by the contributory factors of group distinctiveness, comprising organisational dialect, group identity, social identity, geographic identity and socialisation and organisationally designed group size.

Those factors interacted with the organisationally designed group size which fell at, or not insignificantly close to evolutionary stable group sizes. Staff in DE&S were not truly a tribe, but the combination of the linguistic frameworks, structures, rituals, symbols and group sizes that were supported by the DE&S ethos, all served to create a social framework that caused people to act and think tribally.

The finding that group members identified with different groups in DE&S and that difference was grade related leads to a conclusion that there was a grade related divide within DE&S which may have affected working relationships. Staff predominantly identified most strongly with *'the lads and lasses on the front line'*, not with DE&S. This leads to a conclusion that when senior leaders encouraged people to identify with DE&S and tried to create 'one DE&S', then this created dissonance in those staff who did not identify with DE&S, but who identified with the 'front-line'. It may actually be more productive for senior leaders to not attempt to create a monolithic view of 'one DE&S' but to leave staff to identify with the most important group, their customers, the 'front-line'. This then removes tension from the functional/delivery axis of the DE&S organisational culture and ethos, leaving the ethos to remain pre-eminent.

Uniforms also provided a visible reminder of both the front line and also the difference between the military and civilians. This boundary was in general positive, but on occasion it could lead to tension between the two groups. One conclusion of this, while contentious would be to introduce either a dress code

within DE&S, or even create a DE&S uniform that all staff, whether military or civilian while in DE&S would wear, thus removing all external symbols of difference.

Geographic identity through the use of organisational symbols and personal territory marking produced physical boundaries between groups and staffs. This leads to the conclusion that the groups in DE&S were able to be identified by location and possessed and protected territory in a similar way that is recognised within clans and tribes by anthropologists, thus adding a further factor to the legitimisation of the description of the tribal nature of the organisation. This territorial tension was heightened at a personal and team leader level by the implementation of 'flexi-desking', where people had to book their desks, leading led to what the research calls 'super-competitive behaviours' between staff members who were protecting their territory, their desk. One conclusion of the use of flexi-desking is that before any system such as this is implemented then the socio-emotional needs of staff with regards to territory, desks and their work based and social groups needs to be understood by the implementing organisation.

The language that was used in DE&S showed how group members saw the group, and how they related to their groups and to their peers. Language also provided, through organisational dialect, a further element of group distinctiveness, such as where language was used to mark physical, symbolic and psychological boundaries.

A common metaphor to describe groups was that of the tribe which was used to describe group members lived reality in their work and social groups. Vernacular language described groups as tribes which matched a series of evolutionary stable group size boundaries, such as where a team was too small to be a team, being more like a family, or where the team behaved like a tribe, by, for example, protecting its resources. Language thus described a sub-cognitive reality linking

a group member's intellectual self to the evolutionary concepts that were latent, but hard-wired into humans.

Language also changed in relation to hierarchy. Emotional, pragmatic language was predominantly used below junior leadership level, or military equivalent rank. Above that level, a more objective, non-emotional language predicated a change in relationship between individual group members, and also between group members and DE&S. This appeared to be linked to emotional intelligence and the 'emotional desert' that was observed at this level of the organisational hierarchy, (see for example Goleman et al., 2013).

The finding that language affected the organisational culture of DE&S through the existence of organisational dialects leads to the conclusion that the group language may not have been fully understood by outsiders, thus creating a communications and understanding boundary and glossaries and 'acronym busters' are not enough to breach this boundary. This was known in DE&S, but it was not known how to overcome this boundary. The finding that there were metaphors to describe groups through, size, behaviour and relatedness leads to the conclusion that the linguistic differences occurred at the boundaries of the Operating Centres and Business Units. These groups were all comparable in size to evolutionary group sizes where language became significantly different from other groups. Therefore the tribes could be further distinguished by their linguistic footprint in DE&S. This was a further feature that reinforced the view that DE&S was a tribal organisation.

In terms of integrating staff into teams, there were two types of socialisation in DE&S.

- Formal induction which enabled new group members to understand the rules of the group and also the new group member's technical role within the group.
- Informal integration of new group members into the norms of the group.

Induction within DE&S, and also into DE&S on its creation, was inconsistently practised and experienced. This led to high levels of cynicism amongst group members who experienced it and contributed to them identifying negatively towards DE&S.

Where induction was positively experienced, the group member was more likely to identify positively with their role team and with DE&S. Formal induction was completed within 4-6 weeks of a new member joining their team. This produced a boundary at which point DE&S deemed the group member to be fully inducted and able to perform their role duties, even though the new group member may not have felt totally competent.

Military personnel received a specific welcome into DE&S Abbeywood that was not an induction and which was designed to maintain their military privileges. The JSAU arrivals process was a geographically specific practice for military personnel who were posted to DE&S, and specifically into Abbeywood. It was a purely *life support* function for military personnel. Military personnel received information about military specific training and the medical centre. These were facilities that were available to military personnel only, showing a further degree of differentiation between military and civilian staff, which added to the tensions between those two groups.

The legitimised and required experience of the JSAU arrivals process reinforced the military identity as opposed to developing or reinforcing a pan-DE&S identity or culture, thus indicating once again the multi-cultural nature of DE&S. One consequence of the lack of consistent integration of staff into groups was the lack on integration of mental models, as shown in Figure 2. This led to both tension between the old group and the new member and also cultural drag.

Induction into DE&S at its creation and afterwards into teams was inconsistent. Therefore 'old' DPA and DLO groups and their behaviours could still be seen in DE&S and these groups and their behaviours acted to slow down the organisational, cultural and behavioural changes in DE&S through cultural drag.

The logical conclusion that follows from this is that if DE&S leadership are seeking to create a cohesive organisation and also within organisational transformation, then a hierarchy of technical induction and inclusive socialisation in the DE&S, domain, Operating Centre, Business Unit and teams must be developed. If this is not implemented DE&S will remain a divided organisation and subject to cultural drag, thus slowing down the pace of organisational change. Also new members of staff, and also those that go through organisational changes will remain psychologically in the 'old' organisation, exhibiting behaviours that are not congruent with new ways of working. This also applies to technical organisational changes, where for example, processes or IT systems do not change quickly to match new organisational requirements then this will slow both the pace and likely success of organisational change.

Formal, team-building was found to be inconsistently practised and was therefore inconsistently experienced by those taking part in it. Formal team-building was also found to be generally divisive as described by Sherif (1956) in that competitive team-building built boundaries, whereas collaborative exercises enabled group members to work together.

Formal induction and team-building might therefore be considered to be a waste of DE&S time and money, because of its inconsistency, the manner in which it was practised and the effect that it had on participants. Conversely, informal team-building, where relationships between people were explored was generally seen to be more effective at building better teams. This inconsistency of induction, socialisation and team-building practice also contributed to cultural drag.

Cultural drag occurred because team cultures, such as the DPA (Defence Procurement Agency), the DLO (Defence Logistics Organisation), or the WSA (Warships Support Agency), were more meaningful and also the 'new' DE&S behaviours were not modelled and inculcated into staff via induction into the new DE&S.

In terms of ways of working, or cultural norms in DE&S there were two formal cultural axes that were consistently evident. These applied throughout the research, these axes were the socio-technical and the socio-cultural.

The existence of the socio-technical and the socio-cultural organisation in DE&S was a symptom of the divide between the bureaucracy, and the project teams. The Project Teams saw themselves as being different from the bureaucracy. The divide was also one of the indicators that DE&S was a multi-organisational cultural organisation. This is shown in Figure 6-1 A Conceptual View of the Organisational Culture of DE&S which uses the vernacular labels of the groups to show how the pre-DE&S groups remained in predominantly the same location in DE&S as they had in the DPA and the DLO and that DE&S was the bureaucracy that was imposed on top of the DPA and DLO.

The difference between the Organisational cultures and the Ethos of DE&S are shown in Figure 6-2 Differences: Project Effort and Bureaucratic Culture and Effect. where the horizontal axis represents the bureaucratic, functional culture of DE&S and the vertical axis shows the ethos of 'front-line-first', or delivery.

The single ethos of front-line-first may actually be used as a metaphor to represent the organisational cultures of DE&S as a single statement of an organisational value, and also as a metaphor through which the concept of a single organisational culture may be represented.

That ethos of front-line-first is the power of commitment of the staff in DE&S, and the shadow of bureaucracy was the bureaucratic organisational culture, which intermingled with the multiple organisational cultures in DE&S to hinder the work of DE&S in supplying the armed services with the right equipment, at the right time and at the right cost.

This model is also seen in the 'delivery v functional' model that is described as part of the Bespoke Trading Entity of the new DE&S.

The results were exhaustively validated through reference to prior literature and also by referral back to DE&S. This research is therefore able to confidently suggest that not only is it highly plausible, but that it is completely logical to reach the conclusion that identity, linguistic frameworks, evolutionarily predicated group sizes and also the ways that induction and socialisation were carried out worked together as system of factors to affect the organisational culture of DE&S.

None of the factors worked in isolation from each other, but they may have worked together as a flexible hierarchy of effects depending on the context in which they were experienced, both in time, in relation to internal DE&S, or external factors.

These naturally occurring factors were reinforced by the way that they are organisationally legitimised, thus making DE&S a fractured organisation with no single organisational culture, being thus a multi-organisational cultural organisation, but with a single ethos, that of *front-line-first*.

They were further reinforced by the way that they are organisationally legitimised, thus making DE&S an organisation with no single organisational culture, but instead being a multi-organisational cultural organisation, with a single ethos, that of *front-line first*.

By viewing all of these factors through the lens of social and evolutionary anthropology and combining that with the use of the metaphors of tribe and family in DE&S it enabled this research to describe DE&S as a para-tribal organisation with no single organisational culture, but with a single ethos, that of Front line first and *delivery*.

I suggest that these factors acted together to create a fractured organisation with multiple organisational and social cultures, but within the multiplicity of cultures there was one single ethos that brought all staff together, that of 'front-line-first'. This was the power of commitment and the delivery ethos that supported the front line, but this ethos was overshadowed by the bureaucracy that attempted to stifle



people's efforts to support the front line and which was most visible to politicians and media critics.

### **Implications of this Research**

The study of knowledge-based organisations gives space to identify the interaction of people with the groups that exist in organisations, their identities, cultures and sub-cultures, and how those cultures interact with the technical and functional organisation and also how group size from a right size point of view should be considered.

This research suggests that the combination of socio-technical and socio-cultural analysis of organisations should become an accepted analytical stance within management theory because many organisations are now post-industrial and are knowledge-based, as described by, for example, Alvesson (1993), (2001). Also that the use of evolutionary anthropology and psychology are useful lenses through which underlying reasons for group behaviours may be identified and understood.

The implications for future research fall into three broad camps: one, within Government and large bureaucracies, secondly within other large organisations and thirdly, within the areas of organisational thinking, management theory, organisational design and development.

Within government organisations and large bureaucracies the theoretical framework that was used by this research may be of use in investigating and potentially improving the way that those organisations function. That is because DE&S is part of the same government machinery, and therefore the research may be able to be replicated with the same degree of veracity in other government departments as was obtained in DE&S. That implication may also be valid for large organisations that support bureaucracies, especially in relation to developing the most effective size teams and working groups.

This research has also developed a new way of looking at organisations that is multi modal. It is therefore potentially able to not simply describe and analyse organisations using this framework, but also to recommend valid, academically and experientially supported recommendations to aid organisations and organisational change projects. This research also has implications for management theory, as it has added a further layer of reasoning underneath the existing organisational theory literature, where for example Amason and Sapienza (1997), Curral et al. (2001), Fried (1991), Haleblian and Finkelstein (1993), Pearce and Herbig (2004), Tohid and Tarokh (2006), and also Cohen and Bailey (1997) indicate that team size is functionally driven. This research suggests that there is an underlying cognitive bias within those team sizes that are evolutionarily predicated and that bias can be seen throughout that literature.

Despite these factors producing what appear to be predominantly negative behaviours, which were described in the vernacular and also externally, as tribes and tribalism, the teams and people in DE&S, through the ethos of 'front-line-first', were still committed to the 'front line' and delivering military equipment, often in spite of the efforts of corporate DE&S and the bureaucratic culture.

One final conclusion is that the single ethos of front-line-first may actually be used as a metaphor to represent the organisational cultures of DE&S as a single statement of an organisational value, and also as a metaphor through which the concept of a single organisational culture may be represented.

That ethos of front-line-first is the power of commitment, and the shadow of bureaucracy was the bureaucratic culture, which intermingled with the multiple organisational cultures in DE&S to hinder the work of DE&S in supplying the armed services with the right equipment, at the right time and at the right cost.

### **8.1.3 Recommendations.**

The implications of this research for organisations are wide ranging and cover areas such as identity and commitment to the frontline, organisational culture and ethos, organisational change techniques and also organisational design and creating 'right-size' teams and other groups. This can be achieved by using the framework that has been used within this research to show how identity is linked to commitment, and also how care must be taken when imposing a new organisational identity on an organisation.

- Recommendation: ascertain which groups people identify with, how strongly they identify with them and also how strongly they identify with elements of their organisation and identify exactly what it is that they identify with. This can then be used to develop the new organisational narrative for the new organisation.

This research also helps by showing the importance of induction and socialisation, both in times of organisational change and also when bringing new members into teams. Through the explanation and understanding of the socio-technical and the socio-cultural approaches to socialisation and induction this research has shown how each type of integration is important.

- Recommendation: make induction and socialisation in organisations in all its forms, including team-building consistent and meaningful to team-members.

This research has shown DE&S why the team sizes and also the hierarchy of group sizes are appropriate for DE&S; that they have an evolutionary basis and also that organisational design in DE&S has a cognitive bias.

- Recommendation: organisations must understand that these group sizes are vital to organisational effectiveness, and it must learn to manage and maintain these groupings. It must therefore become consciously competent in recognising the evolutionary effects on organisational design.

This research informs organisational research by showing clearly that there is no single organisational culture in DE&S, but there is a single ethos, that of 'front-line first' that takes primacy over the cultural differences. The work that is being undertaken by consultants to change DE&S, includes changing the organisational culture, this research provides evidence to inform those changes.

- Organisations must firstly understand and then manage the cultural boundaries that exist within them and also those that affect it. It must also understand how culture and ethos interact and ensure that the interaction remains positive, and that as this research suggests, the power of commitment is not swamped by the shadow of bureaucracy.

A further area where this research informs organisational research is that of the implication of the existence of a linguistic change, from employee to stakeholder. This change informs the communication problems that are described in the vernacular between the leadership and the workers. The 'problem' is that there is a difference in language between the two groups, and that difference is not understood by the leadership group, not that there are not enough communications.

- Organisations must understand and then manage the linguistic boundaries that exist within it. It must also understand how language and identity interact and ensure that the interaction remains positive, and that as this research suggests, emotional intelligence levels are raised within the leadership group.

The recommendations of this thesis for DE&S and other organisations are wide ranging and cover areas such as identity and commitment to the *front-line*, however that is defined, organisational culture and ethos, organisational change techniques and also organisational design and creating 'right-size' teams and other groups. DE&S is in 2015 undergoing further change, so this thesis can inform those changes. This can be achieved by using this thesis to show how identity is linked to commitment, and also how care must be taken when imposing a new organisational identity on an organisation.

- Recommendation: ascertain which groups' people identify with, how strongly they identify with them and also how strongly they identify with the new organisational narrative for the BTE. Create a new narrative that staff can identify with without being coerced.
- For other organisations going through organisational change such as mergers, ascertain which groups' people identify with, how strongly they identify with them and also how strongly they identify with the new organisational narrative.

This thesis also helps by showing the importance of induction and socialisation, both in times of organisational change and also when bringing new members into teams. Induction takes more than a week, and socialisation in to the organisational culture a lot longer than that (Shaw, 2004). Through the explanation and understanding of the socio-technical and the socio-cultural approaches to socialisation and induction this thesis has shown how each type of integration is important.

- Recommendation: make induction and socialisation in DE&S in all its forms, including team-building, consistent and more meaningful to team-members.

- All organisations should make induction and socialisation in all its forms, including team-building, consistent and more meaningful to team-members.

This thesis has shown why the team sizes and also the hierarchy of group sizes are appropriate for DE&S and that they have an evolutionary basis. It has also shown that organisational design in DE&S was affected by a cognitive bias.

- Recommendation: DE&S must understand that these group sizes are vital to organisational effectiveness, and it must learn to manage and maintain these groupings. It must therefore become consciously competent in recognising the evolutionary effects on organisational design.
- All large organisations should make efforts to become consciously competent in understanding that these group sizes are vital to organisational effectiveness, and they must learn to manage and maintain these groupings. They must therefore become consciously competent in recognising the evolutionary effects on organisational design.

This thesis informs DE&S by showing clearly that there is no single organisational culture in DE&S, but there is a single ethos, that of 'front-line first' that takes primacy over the cultural differences. The work that is being undertaken by consultants to change DE&S includes changing the organisational culture. This thesis provides evidence to inform those changes and warns against compromising the 'front-line-first' ethos.

- DE&S must firstly understand and then manage the cultural boundaries that exist within it and also those that affect it, such as the front line commands and also of consultants and manpower support, i.e., MSPs

(Managed Service Providers). (The Stationery Office, 2013c) It must also understand how culture and ethos interact and ensure that the interaction remains positive, and that as this thesis suggests, the power of commitment is not swamped by the shadow of bureaucracy.

- Other organisations must make efforts to understand the cultural boundaries and values within their organisations. This will then enable them to understand the tensions between delivery to the customer and the enabling and supporting and to balance the needs of the customer with those of managing the organisation.

A further area where this thesis informs DE&S is that of the implication of the existence of a linguistic change at B2 level, from employee to stakeholder. This change informs the communication problems that are described in the vernacular between the leadership and the workers. The 'problem' is that there is a difference in language between the two groups, and that difference is not understood by the leadership group.

- DE&S must understand and then manage the linguistic boundaries that exist within it. It must also understand how language and identity interact and ensure that the interaction remains positive, and that as this thesis suggests, emotional intelligence levels are raised within the leadership group.
- Large organisations must make efforts to understand the linguistic boundaries that exist within them and make efforts to break those barriers down in order to be more cohesive organisations.

This thesis has shown that personal and geographical identity, both at the group and personal level affects organisation and personal behaviour and culture.

- Recommendation: DE&S must understand and manage personal and geographical identity such as the use of uniforms as a symbol of division between groups. It must also recognise that the marking and protection of territory is an evolved human need. Thus when implementing flexible desking it must understand and address these deep needs in order to make this type of organisational change smooth and successful.
- Organisations must recognise, understand and manage personal and geographical identity as they can become symbols of division between groups. They must also recognise that the marking and protection of territory is an evolved human need and be cognisant of these needs when implementing organisational changes that impinge on group or personal territory.

This thesis also has implications for organisations that interact with DE&S, or are within MOD, such as DSTL, Army HQ, Navy Command and Air Command. They are all large mixed military and civilian organisations, and so have many parallels with DE&S. But also they are in some respects closer to the front-line than is DE&S, and so, if the factors that affect the organisational culture of DE&S are present in those commands, as is likely, the effect on the Command HQ may be that there is also a pattern of cultural fracturing, with multiple organisational cultures, and that there may even be a different ethos. It will be of interest within any future research agenda, if allowed, to shed light on the complexities of those organisational cultures.



## **8.2 A Future Organisational Research Agenda in DE&S and Government Organisations**

In terms of future research agenda, it will be of interest to carry out a comparative study within the Bespoke Trading Entity as part of the DE&S transformation using the theoretical framework from this research in the next phase of organisational changes in DE&S. Also, in relation to the Transformation of D&S into a 'match fit' organisation by 2015 (Shaw, 2015c) a further area that will provide a rich seam of data is that of the changes to the DE&S organisational culture that are being dictated via the organisational change teams and the Managed Service Providers (MSPs) who are attempting to impose new cultural traits onto DE&S, such as personal safety culture (Shaw, 2015c).

In terms of a wider research agenda outside of DE&S, and in UK Government departments it will also be of value to explore the suitability of the framework in the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) as, in 2015, it is going through an organisational change that is similar to the one that DE&S went through between 2007 until 2015. A further field of similar research would be the UK government Cabinet Office, which is currently undergoing substantial organisational change, including for example, the introduction of flexible desking which caused such difficulties in DE&S. The themes that were identified in this research were recognised and expanded on, potentially providing a further field for further research (Shaw, 2015b).

It will also be of interest to replicate this research in the front line headquarters with UK defence, such as Army HQ, Andover, as it is preparing for the Future Force 2020 changes (The Stationery Office, 2015) and at the same time investigating the command culture within the British Army. In a wider practical research sense it will be of further interest to replicate this research in UK defence contractors because of their proximity to DE&S, and also the similarities within

their staffing, secondment and size of the groups within their hierarchy as describe when testing this research.

It will be of further interest to replicate the investigation of group and team sizes within both the wider MOD and also other government departments, defence contractors, non UK military/civilian organisations, non UK government departments and also non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In terms of wider military and civilian organisations, material from this study is already being used as a case study within a NATO report<sup>97</sup> that is investigating tensions between military personnel and civilian staff across NATO as a multi-national, military and civilian organisation.

This research therefore appears to have worldwide applicability at this early stage, even though it was carried out within a single UK organisation.

### **8.2.1 Implications of This Research – A Wider Organisational Research Agenda**

In addition to taking the research framework that was used in this research into other organisations there are specific areas of enquiry that this research may help to illuminate. Some of those are presented here.

During the course of this research it has become apparent that the unique, multi-factorial theoretical and pragmatic approach that was taken by this thesis was of interest to other organisational researchers. Therefore, the implications for future research fall into three broad camps: one, within Government and large bureaucracies; secondly, within other large organisations; and thirdly, within the areas of organisational thinking, management theory, organisational design and development.

Within government organisations and large bureaucracies the theoretical framework that was used by this thesis may be of use in investigating and

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<sup>97</sup> Technical Activity Proposal (TAP) HFM-226.

potentially improving the way that those organisations function. That is because DE&S is part of the same government machinery, and therefore the research may be able to be replicated with the same degree of veracity in other government departments as was obtained in DE&S. This thesis may have direct application within Defence acquisition organisations internationally such as for example Canada and Australia.

This research may be especially useful within NATO, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union as more joint and multi-national military, aid and peace-keeping operations are implemented, with the concomitant need for different military and civilian organisational and national cultures to work together effectively, at short notice and under extreme pressure.

That implication may also be valid for large organisations that support bureaucracies, especially in relation to developing the most effective sized teams and working groups.

This thesis suggests that the combination of socio-technical and socio-cultural analysis of organisations that is outlined in this thesis and which was used within this research should become an accepted analytical stance within management theory to give space to identify the interaction of people with the groups that exist in organisations, their identities, cultures and sub-cultures. It also enables the investigation of how those cultures interact with the technical and functional organisation and also how the planning of group size should be done. Those factors, combined with the use of evolutionary anthropology and psychology are useful lenses through which underlying reasons for group behaviours may be identified and understood.

This thesis also has implications for management theory, as it has added a further layer of reasoning underneath the existing organisational theory literature, where for example Amason and Sapienza (1997), Curral et al. (2001), Fried (1991), Haleblan and Finkelstein (1993), Pearce and Herbig (2004), Tohidi and Tarokh (2006), and also Cohen and Bailey (1997) indicate that team size is functionally

driven. This thesis suggests that there is an underlying cognitive bias within those team sizes that are evolutionarily predicated and that bias can be seen throughout that literature.

A further area that warrants investigation is the relationship between team size and high and low performing teams, thus expanding and developing the work of, for example (Anthony and Janet, 2002, Katzenbach and Smith, 1992, Yeatts and Hyten, 1998).

This thesis has also indicated that as Nicholson (Nicholson, 2000, Nicholson, 2008) describes organisations are both unnatural and also that evolutionary factors affect organisational management and outputs. Therefore this thesis and its supporting theoretical and investigatory frameworks can usefully be used to further investigate and explain the effects of some evolutionary factors, such as group size and language within organisations.



# Epilogue

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis has documented aspects of DE&S culture from its inception in 2007. This epilogue is being written in April 2014, in the first weeks of the new Bespoke Government Trading Entity (BTE).

## 1.2 Vesting Day April 2, 2014

In 2012 it was decided to implement major changes in DE&S, and in 2014 the Defence Reform Bill was passed by Her Majesty's Government (The Stationery Office, 2013a). The plan was initially to change DE&S from a Civil Service organisation into a Government Owned Contractor Operated entity (GOCO), with external partners providing particular areas of expertise.

The change programme had been led by the Materiel Strategy Team, with external support. However, the transition to GOCO was not universally well received, generating high levels of cynicism, both within DE&S and outside (The Stationery Office, 2013b). In the event, due to commercial considerations, a GOCO was not created. Instead a new version of DE&S was created within three months of the GOCO proposal being rejected after £7.4m (Unknown, 2014) had been spent on the plans.

To document the process, practice and behaviours and effects of the GOCO changes on the DE&S workforce would require a study in its own right.

Therefore, this epilogue will take some of the themes that were identified within this thesis and discuss the transition from DE&S to the Bespoke Trading Entity (BTE) within those frames of reference.

This approach seeks to identify any initial differences and similarities between the organisational changes that occurred to merge the DPA and the DLO to form DE&S, and those that led to the creation of the BTE.

The original concept of the Government Owned Contractor Operated entity for DE&S was proposed by Bernard Gray<sup>98</sup> in his report Review of Defence Acquisition for the Secretary of State For Defence, called the Gray Report (The National Archive, 2012) In DE&S, the move towards a (GOCO) was signified by the creation of a small separate team to manage the materiel strategy.

This created an in-group that were different from the rest of DE&S, because the group was mostly populated by external consultants. The members of this group were psychologically in the new organisation, because they were designing it, as opposed to everyone else in DE&S, who, in the vernacular, were still getting *kit out of the door to support the lads and lasses on the frontline*.

The group driving these changes only expanded in late 2013 when it became increasingly clear that the commercial bidders for the GOCO were pulling out of the commercial process (Unknown, 2013) The fact that the bidders pulled out reinforced and appeared to vindicate the cynicism that was felt and articulated by many members of DE&S. That was because while changes were necessary, it was believed that the GOCO option did not appear to be the right one, because the majority of people in DE&S were civil servants and they felt that they were there to serve the front line, and not to make profits (Shaw, 2013f).

The competition rules under which the GOCO was being run meant that an internal comparator had to be developed. This internal comparator was in essence DE&S being run as a Civil Service organisation as opposed to being part, or wholly privatised. This was accompanied by even more cynicism as this internal comparator, which was called DE&S+, and which was initiated after the GOCO programme, had to build up staff and experience. This group held a series of workshops at which selected employees were asked what was good or bad about DE&S, in order to inform the comparator. In December 2013, it became clear that the GOCO could not go ahead at that time because all the bidders,

apart from one, had pulled out. This event triggered an intense period of work to develop a solution that was called DE&S ++, which became the Bespoke Trading Entity (BTE) that vested on 1 April 2014.

Work to provide information for the GOCO work engendered huge amounts of antipathy from all grades towards the Materiel Strategy Team, not only because of the bureaucratic demands for information to inform the materiel strategy, but also because of the feeling that a GOCO was not going to work because of the nature of DE&S's work, how people felt about it and the nature of the changes.

Expectations prior to, and on, vesting day from DE&S to BTE were managed differently from when DE&S was created. It was made clear by senior staff that not much was going to change, (Shaw, 2014a) and that employees would not see much change until managed service partners were brought in (Smith, 2014). These managed service partners were to bring in extra skills and experience that DE&S supposedly did not possess.

So the only changes that were seen were that the neighbourhoods were decorated, flooring and toilets repaired, and planning applications for more car parking spaces were made. It was announced that there would be changes to the annual performance review system, which had received a negative reaction from a large number of civilian staff (Shaw, 2014a).

But one of the most discussed changes were the freedoms to pay higher salaries and to operate differently as the BTE moved away from a central MOD organisation, to become an organisation that had hard boundaries between the Ministry of Defence and the frontline commands. But in relation to this, staff were told that the extra money was not for them, it was only for new people who had the skills that they, the old staff in DE&S, did not have, thus having the effect of making many staff even more cynical about the changes. Some of this cynicism was blunted by DE&S carrying out a piece of work to take suggestions that were made by staff on day one, and then put in place 'hygiene changes' such as repairs to buildings and improvements to the bane of Abbeywood staffs' lives, car-parking



(Shaw, 2014f). This was a difference from the DPA and DLO merger, where the only changes that were seen on day one were symbolic.

In terms of identity, the name of the organisation remained the same, but it was a different, new type of organisation. The Chief of Defence Materiel (CDM) became its Chief Executive. The flag outside the front of Abbeywood remained the same, but the strapline 'The Future is ours to Deliver', was emblazoned on all of flags that greeted new staff on day one, as shown in Photograph 1-1.



**Photograph 1-1 DE&S Bespoke Trading Entity Symbols April 1 2014**

Source: Andrew Linnet Crown Copyright

Another difference between the creation of the BTE and DE&S was that there were no new lanyards for staff who remained in DE&S. The staff, however, of the organisation that left DE&S: the Information Systems and Support (ISS) organisation, which became part of Joint Forces Command (JFC) April 2014, received a new lanyard to signify their new symbolic and pragmatic identity. The lanyard, shown in Photograph 1-2 was therefore used to signify a new identity, not a continuing identity. There is no reference to DE&S on the lanyard. The reference is to Joint Forces Command (JFC), representing a total divesting of the

old, DE&S identity. Many of those people then remained at Abbeywood, carrying on as before in their teams and work-groups and also on the same floor-plates. Therefore their geographical identity had not changed although their organisational identity had.



**Photograph 1-2 ISS JFC Lanyard**

Source: Derek Shaw

But the imposition of lanyards and identity on the staff of ISS appeared to have the same effect in 2014, as did the imposition of the DE&S identity on the staff of the DPA and the DLO in 2007, i.e., they were treated negatively:

*'You noticed and asked about my new lanyard. Yes, I got 3-line-whipped to replace my Help For Heroes lanyard with a Joint Force Command/ISS lanyard as part of the rebranding and, I suppose, initial psychological separation, exercise. I'll wait a bit until the rebranding enthusiasm has died down and swap back to HfH [Help for Heroes].....the reason I'm here is to support Front Line at whatever remove, not to embroil myself in the constant organisational churn as internal empires rise and fall' (Shaw, 2014b).*



**Photograph 1-3 Chief Defence Materiel With the Vesting Day Cake**

Source: Andrew Linnet. Crown Copyright

There was also a food element to induction into the BTE, as there was cake and a barbecue available in the central plaza. The changes on Day One were overwhelmingly symbolic, not substantial, pragmatic, and consisted of flags, cakes, as shown in Photograph 1-3, of Bernard Gray, DE&S Chief of Defence Materiel, standing next to the DE&S cake.

There was an implied socio-cultural element to the day's events, because in addition to being away from one's desk and listening to the briefings and being able to socialise with others. Photograph 1-4 shows Bernard Gay unveiling the new DE&S plaque.



**Photograph 1-4 Unveiling the Plaque on Vesting Day**

Source: Andrew Linnet. Crown Copyright

The unveiling of a plaque is a further indication that space can be used in a symbolic way to construct, or re-construct identities as is described by Van Marrewijk and Yanow (2010).

Photograph 1-5 shows Bernard Gray addressing staff on vesting day. These events were held in then Neighbourhoods across DE&S Abbeywood. A small stage was created to raise the speaker up and amplification was provided so that everyone could hear what the speaker was saying. In this Neighbourhood the audience can be seen on the balconies and walkways as being at floor level. This indicates the popularity of the events.

There are two things that are of immediate noteworthiness within this Neighbourhood. Firstly the Ensign that has been draped over the balcony was a tribal symbol, of the Royal Navy, and that an Operating Centre, not a DE&S symbol. This indicates that there was large naval contingent in this Neighbourhood. In fact this is where the Maritime Domain within DE&S is centred. The visibility of the ensign ensures that anyone who sees that

photograph knows which group predominates in that Neighbourhood, it is a symbol of presence and power and its use indicated that this group may have wanted to be recognized as being different within the new organisational construct, or perhaps as a challenge to the new corporate identity.

Secondly, the restaurant areas, which is visible in the photograph as the sunken area immediately behind the stage, were cleared of tables for that day and a reduced food service was made available to staff. This clearance was made to enable more staff to be able to listen to the corporate message. As is shown in the photograph, attendance at this event was very high because not only were people interested in the messages and what was happening to them and their jobs on vesting day, but some of the senior staff were not usually seen by many staff, so this was an opportunity to meet with and talk to the senior leaders.



**Photograph 1-5 Vesting Day Briefing by the new Chief Executive.**

Source: Andrew Linnet. Crown Copyright

### 1.3 Conclusion

Even if people attended the briefings on day one, and there were many that did, their jobs did not change on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Socialisation into the changed organisation was attempted, but not achieved through '*town hall*' meetings where the Chief of Defence Materiel or materiel strategy director briefed up to 400 people, normally 200 in number (Shaw, 2014n). This was formal communication with questions and answers.

The concept of the structure of the Bespoke Trading Entity was briefed to 1\* and 2\* leaders (Shaw, 2014g) and they were asked to hold cascade briefs to further brief their staff. There were differing levels of engagement and cynicism from these leaders. This could be interpreted as honesty, over the magnitude of the intended changes, or cynicism in the way that it was managed (Shaw, 2014g).

There may be a more formal induction to the Bespoke Trading Entity as time progresses, and the researcher may still, at that time, be part of DE&S, and will make notes and will analyse the induction practice and judge its effectiveness. Let us hope, that at a cultural level the difficulties inherent in DE&S' will not be re-invented and that the new DE&S will at last learn from its own experiences of organisational change.



# **Appendixes**

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Questions That Informed the Research**

“Does the tribal nature of the groups of people within these organisations influence knowledge transfer between the groups, if there is an effect, what is it?”.

“How is the effect caused? Why does it happen and how can organisations use any influence to their advantage?”.

“Does the ritual and symbolism that is used to inculcate loyalty and identity to an organisation, make it more difficult for people in these organisations to trust others who are not in their organisation?”.

“How does the ritualism and symbolism that exists within each service affect a service member’s ability to trust other staff who are not of their service group?”.

“Do the induction methods used and promoted by groups within the organisation influence knowledge transfer between groups and individuals within those groups?”.

“How are people in the groups affected by the induction and identity development and maintenance processes; can this effect be reliably measured?”.

“What are the unseen frameworks, linguistic, behavioural, personal and organisational that cause people to behave in this way?”.

“How does the change in membership of these groups affect the core group identity”.



“Does a person still maintain an identity in their core group and what type of identity does it become when they have left the core group?”.<sup>99</sup>

“What identity is retained when members of the armed forces leave the active service by their joining the Royal British Legion, for example or retiring and joining the civil service retirees groups?”.

“What identity is retained when members of a single service move to a joint service posting?”.

“Does the fact that in the services as in any large organisation, many people find their life partner, spouse, lover or significant other and form relationships with them that become permanent both within and outside of any organisational context cause people to develop a stronger identity?”.

“What effect is there in belonging to one of these groups in respect to knowledge transfer? If you are a member of one of these groups and another member has some privileged information do you get that information first?”, “under the counter”, before the people who are supposed to get that information?”

“If you are not a member of one of those in-groups are you ignored or downgraded in terms of trust for receiving information”?

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<sup>99</sup> One example is where the number of smokers has declined, but the reformed smokers group may have expanded or these people may not belong or identify themselves with a group at all once they have left the ‘smokers’ group.

## Appendix B

### Academic Papers Derived From This Thesis

Liverpool Management School and Keele University Ethnography Conference, held at Cardiff Business School: The Power of Commitment v. the Shadow of Bureaucracy: Socialisation, Identity and Group Behaviour in the Ministry of Defence in Defence Equipment and Support.  
[http://www.liv.ac.uk/managementschool/ethnography\\_conference/papers2011/Shaw.pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/managementschool/ethnography_conference/papers2011/Shaw.pdf)

The Power of Commitment v. the Shadow of Bureaucracy: Socialisation, Identity and Group Behaviour in the Ministry of Defence in Defence Equipment and Support, Presented at Emerging Ethnographic Friendships Conference 20-21 June 2012, University Campus Suffolk, Ipswich, UK

The Power of Commitment v. the Shadow of Bureaucracy: Socialisation, Identity and Group Behaviour in the Ministry of Defence in Defence Equipment and Support. Presented at Shrivenham Student Symposium 2012.

Culture and Transformation in Defence: Recent Research Findings in DE&S. presented at Beckett House Network Series: with Dr Kirke.

Architectures and Physical boundaries as signifiers of inter-group conflict: Presented at ULMS Ethnography Conference, UCS, Ipswich August 2014.

PhD Poster: ULMS Ethnography Conference, UCS, Ipswich August 2014.

In preparation: Case study, Tensions between military and civilian employees, NATO task: Technical Activity Proposal (TAP) HFM-226.

In preparation: Book chapter: Identity Transitions in Ethnographic Research, in Encountering Ethnographies, (provisional title), Palgrave Macmillan.



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- SHAW, D. 2011l. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by Author . .
- SHAW, D. 2011m. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by author Interview ABW 33. A C2 grade Civil Servant in Operating Centre D.
- SHAW, D. 2011n. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by Author. .
- SHAW, D. 2011o. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by Author.
- SHAW, D. 2011p. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by Author. .
- SHAW, D. 2011q. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Abbeywood between January and March 2011. Retained by Author. .
- SHAW, D. 2011r. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Corsham between January and March 2011. Retained by Author
- SHAW, D. 2011s. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Corsham between January and March 2011. Retained by Author.
- SHAW, D. 2011t. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Ensleigh between January and March 2011. Retained by Author
- SHAW, D. 2011u. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Ensleigh between January and March 2011. Retained by Author.
- SHAW, D. 2011v. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Foxhill between January and March 2011. Retained by Author. .
- SHAW, D. 2011w. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Site A between January and March 2011. Retained by Author
- SHAW, D. 2011x. Field notes May 2011., Corsham.
- SHAW, D. 2011y. Field notes NH 4 18 March, conversation with a B1 grade Team Leader adjacent to the smoking shelter.

SHAW, D. 2011z. Field Notes October 12 2011, retirement party of a B1 grade, NH2.

SHAW, D. 2011aa. Field notes, Conversation with a retiring B1 grade Civil Servant in the Transformation Team.

SHAW, D. 2011ab. Field Notes, Operating Centre D January 2011.

SHAW, D. 2011ac. Field Notes. IPF meeting 23 March 2011 Ensleigh.

SHAW, D. 2011ad. LFE Induction Report. Weapons Operating Centre.

SHAW, D. 2011-2014. Composite Field Notes 2011-2014.

SHAW, D. 2012a. Field Notes 3 Nov 2012, meeting 2\* to present findings, Maple NH2 Abbeywood. .

SHAW, D. 2012b. Field notes 14 March 2012. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2012c. Field Notes 29 November 2012.

SHAW, D. 2012d. Field Notes 29 November 2012.

SHAW, D. 2012e. Field notes April 2012. Throw away comment at the end of a meeting by a C1 Civil servant, when discussing the organisation of work and work load on teams. .

SHAW, D. 2012f. Field notes Christmas 2012.

SHAW, D. 2012g. Field Notes Corsham New Environment April 2012.

SHAW, D. 2012h. Field Notes from Structured Interviews conducted at Shrivenham January 2012. Retained by author, .

SHAW, D. 2012i. Field notes November 29 2012.

SHAW, D. 2012j. Field notes October 2012 Operating Centre D Observation on the induction of a new team member in Operating Centre D.

SHAW, D. 2012k. Field notes October 2012, CoM Land Organogram.

SHAW, D. 2012l. Field notes on co-worker leaving the department- Early Release and Retirement.

SHAW, D. 2012m. Field notes Posted 18 Sep 2012 on Defence Bulletin Board.

SHAW, D. 2013a. Field notes 5 Aug 2013. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2013b. Field Notes from Observations at Abbeywood and other sites. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2013c. Field notes August 2013 Operating Centre D, discussion between military personnel over the format of a team-building event.

SHAW, D. 2013d. Field Notes August and September 2013. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2013e. Field Notes Bicester.

SHAW, D. 2013f. Field Notes Composite during preparation for GOCO.

SHAW, D. 2013g. Field notes December 12 2013. Observing a C1 grade civil servant who passed the A&DC after several attempts, their floorplate behaviours changed to be become less 'team' and more 'I'. .

SHAW, D. 2013h. Field notes March 2013, DE&S Change programme.

SHAW, D. 2013i. Field notes October 2013 Operating Centre D floorplate conversation on Information Technology assistance to teams. .

SHAW, D. 2013j. Field notes October 2013 Operating Centre D in a particularly tense day, between two members of staff.

SHAW, D. 2013k. Field notes Operating Centre Floorplate conversation with a B2 grade Civil servant after a team briefing where the briefer had used bureaucrats throughout their briefing to describe people and tasks.

SHAW, D. 2013l. Field notes Retained by author.

SHAW, D. 2013m. Field notes Shrivenham Students Symposium 2013.

SHAW, D. 2013n. Field Notes, August 2013, Nh4.

SHAW, D. 2013o. Field Notes, conversation with acquaintance from Operating Centre C, a grade C1 Civil Servant.

SHAW, D. 2013p. Field Notes, Conversation with Brigadier Deputy Quartermaster for COM Land in DE&S who was responsible for implementing Future Army Dress.

SHAW, D. 2013q. Field Notes, Conversation with Lt Colonel working in Operating Centre D.

SHAW, D. 2013r. Field Notes. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2013s. Field Notes. Talk To The Board Questions raised on desk Booking and allocations in Abbeywood: TTTB 1401-004, TTTB 1405-003 - Desk Booking-and TTTB 1311-004 Desk and laptop availability at Abbey. .

SHAW, D. 2013t. Field Notes: Confirmed by Head of Profession, September 2013.

SHAW, D. 2013u. Field notes: Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2013-2014. Field Notes June 2013, March 2014 Operating Centre D.

SHAW, D. 2014a. Field notes 1 April 2014 Nh 4 Atrium.

SHAW, D. 2014b. Field notes 3 April 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014c. Field Notes 8 April 2014, meeting at OC B (Rorke's Drift) Coy, 1 R WELSH, Lucknow Barracks, Iowa Rd, Tidworth. .

SHAW, D. 2014d. Field Notes 8 March 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014e. Field notes 8 Sept 2014 conversation in NH2 with a member of staff from Corsham who remarked that even though the Tribal chiefs had gone, the tribes still existed in Corsham. .

SHAW, D. 2014f. Field notes 11 July 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014g. Field notes 12 March 2014 Operating Centre D Floorplate brief by Director.

SHAW, D. 2014h. Field Notes 15 April 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014i. Field notes April 2014, July 2014. Operating Centre D. Observing team members preparing themselves for the A&DC.

SHAW, D. 2014j. Field Notes at Abbeywood. Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2014k. Field Notes August 28 2014 Poster on notice board in Operating Centre D restaurant.

SHAW, D. 2014l. Field Notes August 2014 At the New Operating Centre D induction, a newcomer remarked that they had to learn a completely new language as they had come from a different Government Department to work in DE&S.

SHAW, D. 2014m. Field notes January 2014. Top Team consisted of Chief of Defence Materiel, DG Resources, Chief of Materiel Air, Chief of Materiel Land, Chief of Materiel, Fleet, Chief of Materiel, Joint Enablers, Director General Commercial.

SHAW, D. 2014n. Field notes March 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014o. Field Notes Meeting 1 May 2014 Nh 4 Restaurant. B1 Commercial, Assessor of the A&DC. .

SHAW, D. 2014p. Field Notes Operating Centre D March 4 2014.

SHAW, D. 2014q. Field Notes Retained by Author.

SHAW, D. 2014r. Field notes, July 2014 conversation with a B1 grade Team Leader on Operating Centre D when discussing options for floorplate moves of teams.

SHAW, D. 2015a. Field notes, Atrium Operating Centre D, part of a conversation discussing the changes to DE&S and the reaction to the Price Waterhouse Coopers HR Workshops, 3rd Feb 2015.

SHAW, D. 2015b. Field notes, Meeting of Cross Government Knowledge Management Working Group at HM Treasury, 16 April 2015.

SHAW, D. 2015c. Field Notes. Transformation Workshop November 2015. MSP introducing the 'imposition of a Personal Safety Culture on DE&S staff'.

SHAW, D. 2015d. Field Notes.: Observations. Retained by Author.

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